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Near East & South Asia

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Posuvalyuk on Relations With Muslim World

92AE0544A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
25 Jul 92 p 6

[Interview with V.V. Posuvalyuk by unnamed AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT correspondent; place and date not given]

[Text] Victor Posuvalyuk is a prominent political leader in the Russian Foreign Ministry and is very familiar with our Arab area, where he has worked for many years. He attracted world attention during the Gulf crisis when he was serving as his country's ambassador to Baghdad. He refused to leave Baghdad even after the war broke out. He stayed there with a limited number of his colleagues. For this he was very much appreciated and received outstanding awards.

Now, on the eve of his upcoming tour of the Arab region, with Cairo being his first stop, Victor Posuvalyuk has given an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT concerning the importance of this trip and its objectives in light of recent changes, especially the ascension of Rabin as prime minister of the Israeli cabinet. In spite of the fact that the interview took place on the eve of the second anniversary of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the man who knows the secrets of that event refused to talk about it, explaining that his official position forces him remain silent now; however, he promised to discuss this issue at a later, more suitable time.

We started our interview by asking him to comment on Moscow's diminished role in foreign politics and also on the scope of its Middle East policy. He wasted no time in saying:

[Posuvalyuk] Truly, I am very happy to entertain this question because lately I have been hearing some misperceptions and sometimes even dishonest judgements regarding the nonexistence of a Russian Middle East policy. Before I refute these claims and explain the basic objectives of our policy in this very important region—we truly attach great importance to this area—I would like to talk about the objective of those who say these things. I can classify the accusers into three categories: the first are those who do not know much about our policy and its achievements in this respect; the second are those who truly want a more active Russian policy in this region as well as others; the third are those who want the Russian policy in the Middle East to be weak, inaccurate and confused. In any event, we categorically refute such a position. We believe that we have a strong Middle East policy and a clear course which we try as much as possible to follow consistently, which is very important also.

What are the basic aims of our policy? These are embodied in the geopolitical and strategic aspects of securing peace in the south of Russia and in areas close to its borders which have historically been the scenes of military and political conflicts. It is one of our basic functions to keep such complications away from us in

Russia and away from those who surround us and also from the people of the Middle East. The second function is to enhance political cooperation with the countries of this region which play a vital role in international politics. In this respect, I would like to point to a new kind of progress we are making as we work to develop our relations in the Middle East without any wish to make enemies there or to be hostile to anybody. We would like to have good relations with all based upon the mutual benefit and interests of all parties. We reject the position of those who say that our relations with Israel hurt our relations with the Arab countries. We do not believe so. We are not in a position where our relations with one party could hurt the other party. We are in a position that forces us to make friends and enhance our friendship with them. We are not looking for enemies and this is one of our basic principles. We are not looking for enemies in the Middle East or in any other part of the world. That's why we believe that such an analogy is fabricated. It is true that we have taken great strides towards Israel but this is not a counterweight and it is not at the expense of our relations with the Arab countries. On the contrary, we are doing our best to develop our relations with the Arabs.

Relations With the Arabs

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] I think that you know what they mean when they say in the Arab world that there is no [Russian] Middle East policy. I also think that they are quite right when they refer to the weakness of the Russian role on the international level. In this regard, you have to agree with me that in the past there was a balance between Washington and Moscow on the international level. Now that Russia is concentrating on its domestic problems, it is natural to say that there is a new world order in which there is one superpower, the United States.

[Posuvalyuk] In spite of the over-simplification in this analysis, I would like to go back once more to the Middle East. I agree with you that beforehand there was a balance between the two superpower policies and interests, that is, of the former Soviet Union and the United States. But now we do not have such a confrontation. Does that mean a diminution of the significance and role of the the Soviet Union? Here I cannot agree with you because, for example, we are brokering the peace process in the Middle East, that is, the greatest political process since the 40's. Russia is not only the broker, but it started the operation and is one of its two co-sponsors. We are doing a lot and I would like to talk to you about what is taking place in this respect. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, we find that our relations with all of the Gulf Arab countries are improving. Isn't this a Russian move towards new positions in the Middle East? Isn't this considered an enhancement of the relations with the Arab countries? I agree with you that our relations with some of the Arab countries, which I will not name, are undergoing a kind of deterioration in the economic and commercial fields. But I would have to say that this is due in some part to our problems and also to the change

in the nature of these relations. We now have companies in the private sector. As for when we will have new interaction with the economic institutions in the Arab world, I do not know that. I have to admit that the process is slower than what we would like it to be. But I do not agree with such viewpoints that say we have no Middle East policy.

Peace Negotiations

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] You say that the peace negotiations are going through some hard times. What do you see on the horizon in the light of recent developments, including the ascension of Rabin to the new Israeli cabinet?

[Posuvalyuk] To begin, I would like to say that the negotiating parties and the two brokers, plus those parties that are indirectly concerned, among whom are the major world powers and regions, have built up a significant potential as a result of the Madrid conference and the Moscow meeting and the five rounds of bilateral negotiations. Most recently we had the multilateral meeting that had very significant impact.

The potential is there and we also know that the two co-sponsors intend to participate more actively in moving the peace process ahead. Here we have the question you want me to answer. We in Moscow believe that the election statements and the Rabin program and the formulation of his cabinet and, most recently, his statements after coming to power are all promising indicators. We think that we have a very realistic chance to achieve progress in the Middle East peace process. Of course, it all depends on the conference and the willingness of both parties to compromise. But for now we are very optimistic. I can even say that the line of thinking of the two co-sponsors and the other countries, as well as of the Arab world, is characterized by a positive estimation of the changes that have taken place in Israel.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Now we are on the eve of the second anniversary of the Gulf war during which you had some very difficult times. My question is whether you knew that Iraq was going to invade Kuwait? I say that because Shevardnadze was surprised when he heard the news. As an ambassador, did you know?

[Posuvalyuk] Let us drop this subject for the time being. We agreed that I am going to write about this part of my life and my career. When the time comes, I will talk about this period and take these events away from the complicated and simultaneously rich situation. When this happens, we will talk about it in detail.

The Islamic Republics

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Well, I will respect your wishes hoping that we talk about this topic at a later time. It is being said that Russia would like to compete with Iran and Turkey in having influence in the Islamic republics. Are there successful attempts to strengthen the relations with the Islamic republics through the attempts

of Kozyrev and according to the bilateral agreements between Russia and the Islamic Republics? What is your opinion in the respect?

[Posuvalyuk] It is natural that talk increases about these issues. Our two neighboring countries could have plans to strengthen their relations with the countries of the southern belt of the Commonwealth of the Independent States. On the other hand, I do not see any competition between Russia and Turkey and Iran. This is due to the differences among us as far as the nature and scope of policy. That is why I do not see any competitors with Russia inside the CIS; because we have our own corner and our scope of work, if you will. Our bonds go further back than the seventy years of the Soviet rule. We have centuries of very close and brotherly co-operation. Also, there is the economy which is the most important thing. Nobody can compete with Russia in this field. Some of the remarks that you have mentioned, however, might be related to the spiritual aspect; that is, that Islam unites the countries of the region. In this respect, I would like to say that we are not in a situation of competition. Russia could be considered an Islamic republic as we have a large number of Muslims. In the new Russia, there is a new attitude towards religion. We show great respect for the aspirations of the Muslims in the CIS to rebuild relations with our neighbors to the south upon a new basis. We will never be an obstacle in this respect. What is very important to us is that there should not be extremes that dictate the lives of people and hinder their interaction within these countries. Recently, we exerted great efforts to enhance relations with the Muslims inside Russia as well as throughout the CIS. They are our neighbors. I would like to say officially that Russia and its Foreign Ministry have exerted great efforts to facilitate the pilgrimage for thousands of Muslims to Holy Mecca. This issue was handled personally by Mr. Andrei Kozyrev (our Foreign Minister) as well as by other state officials. We spent large sums of money. You can judge for yourself if you look at the efforts exerted by our embassy and our consulate in Jeddah in this respect. We no longer have a Council for Religious Affairs. The Muslims take care of handling their own religious relations. Our Foreign Minister attaches great importance to this issue. He met with Muslim dignitaries and the Muslims themselves in Moscow. We are strengthening our relations with them and help them in arranging for the pilgrimage and in establishing relations with the Arab World and the Islamic universities. I do not want to be evasive in this respect, but I do not see any competition between Russia and Turkey in any field. There are areas of cooperation between us and the countries of the CIS in which we have not yet invested much. We hope that God will give us the power to strengthen them. On top of that, it is not wise to compete in the development of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, for example, as they have many common grounds some of which are very deep rooted.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] I think there is nothing wrong with diplomatic competition in the defense of national

interests. It is the right of every country, as long as the competition follows established methods.

[Posuvalyuk] Even though we do not foresee any field of competition. Russia is not Turkey. Personally, I do not see any room for competition. It is natural that Turkey will have close relations with the Islamic countries. Let them do that. There will also be economic and commercial competition. Of course, you agree with me that our companies will face competition in the markets as far as the quality and price of goods. As for political competition, I do not resort to that and these things are strange to us in Russia.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Russia is now worried about what is happening near its southern borders. Islam Krimof suggested discussing this issue during a meeting with the commonwealth foreign ministers. In this respect, I would like to ask about the relations with Afghanistan after the recent changes there.

[Posuvalyuk] This is not my field of work. I can only give you generalities in this respect.

Mideast Tour

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Let us then talk about your tour of Middle East countries. What is the objective of this visit?

[Posuvalyuk] There are two objectives: first, as brokers, we would like to talk directly, before the start of the autumn round of talks, with the parties to the bilateral talks and also to the multilateral talks which are Syria, Lebanon and Israel. We had meetings in Moscow with Palestinians from the PLO and will have talks with Palestinians in the region, also. We would like to talk to two other important parties as well, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, because even though they are not directly involved in the negotiations, they influence the peace process to a great extent.

The second objective is to talk in detail with all these parties concerning our bilateral relations with a view to reactivating them and resolving the associated problems. We are trying to pinpoint the weak aspects in our bilateral relations with any party. I will come back once more, we will keep in touch, and try to push our relations forward. This is not an easy task. It is quite difficult.

We are going to make a kind of inventory in our relations with the Arab world, with the above mentioned Arab countries and with Israel. In addition to that, we are going to continue on the established path in our relations with the Gulf countries. Great efforts are being exerted in this respect.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Does your tour include a visit to Saudi Arabia?

[Posuvalyuk] Yes, we included Saudi Arabia in the tour. Bearing in mind its influence in the Arab world and its participation in the Mideast peace process. The Saudis play a very important role.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Please explain to me Moscow's position that is usually characterized by minister-level dealings. I fully appreciate your visit; but once more your minister is favoring another area while everyone had hoped he would come to the Middle East following Mr. Baker's visit.

[Posuvalyuk] I do not see it as you do. I will give you two examples. Our minister visited six Gulf countries while Mr. Baker did not go for such a visit. On the other hand, who started preparations for the fall talks? It was not the American broker. It was we who had the Russian-Palestinian consultations. The point is that we do not intend to enter into a competition with the American broker or even to start to imitate one another. We work on a basis of partnership. We do not even follow the steps of one another. I am not trying to belittle the American broker. I do not want to give such an impression. On the contrary. Each one of us does his part, using his potentialities to move the settlement of the Mideast problem. We have just had a Palestinian delegation headed by 'Abu Mazin. We had extensive talks. We notified others that include the Arab countries, the direct parties, the American broker and some European countries. This constituted a push forward. Mr. Baker is currently visiting the area. I will conduct talks the results of which I do not know yet. This does not mean that we imitate the actions of one another. There could be a more important step tomorrow. For example, Mr. Quayle did not visit Israel and Egypt, while our Vice-President Mr. Alexander Rutskoy did. The speaker of the U.S. Congress did not visit Saudi Arabia. The speaker of our Parliament, Mr. Hassab Latouf did. That is why I think that it is wrong to find mathematical equations with common denominators in the actions of the two brokers. I think that your question is inappropriate. I just gave some examples.

The Situation in Algeria

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Sometimes I allow myself to ask such questions because I would like to give the reader a comprehensive picture at a time when there are signs of a diminishing Russian dynamic and a rise in the importance of association with the West. Let us now deal with another subject. What is Moscow's reaction towards what is happening in Algeria?

[Posuvalyuk] Let me say, first, that the relations are complicated and multi-dimensional. Algerian-Russian relations are full of internal sympathy. It is one of the few countries where temporary subjective elements did not cloud our relations. I say one of the few countries because we had a close friendship with Egypt, then there were many actions, from both sides, such as the departure of the experts and many other upheavals. With Algeria we have had consistently good relations based on the national struggle and the Algerian liberation movement and the heroism of the Algerians. I would like to repeat that our position towards Algeria has always been an extremely cordial one. What is taking place there is a domestic issue. If it means anything, then it means that

there are deep-rooted social, political and economic changes. Economy dictates its requirements as is the case in other countries, ours for example. We can not look superficially at what is happening in Algeria. If you want our reaction in particular: We would like of the Algerian leaders not to resort to extreme actions, as is currently happening in Russia. It would be better to look for political solutions, to ease the tension and conduct dialogues with all the major political powers. We think that the biggest mistake for the Algerians is to make harsh decisions. The new Algerian leaders did not resort to this, which is a very good sign. Concentrating on political dialogue and having a well-informed man and an economic expert on the helm of the government means that an attempt will be made to deal with the economic problems of the country. We hope that national understanding will prevail in Algeria.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] There is a concern in the world that extremists are emerging once more. How should this problem be dealt with?

[Posuvalyuk] We can take many different positions. As you know, the attitude toward all religions has changed in our country. The government, the Supreme Soviet, and the President himself attach great importance to this issue, as also do I, as the chairman of the department for countries inhabited by Muslim peoples, and particularly Africa. The situation there is very diverse. The fundamental trend is a social phenomenon in the domestic and spiritual life of the people which should be taken into account. If you are referring to extremes that have political dimensions and intrude upon political and social life, that bother people or interfere in international relations, we are against it, as are the majority of the countries. This does not mean at all that we are enemies of religion, including Islam. We support an Islam that is tolerant. We hope that a moderate and constructive Islam will flourish. Such an Islam will eliminate anarchy and atheism. This is a very important matter.

Mutual Benefit

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] There is talk in Moscow that denounces rapprochement and co-operation with the Arabs including the Palestinians. They also say that when Moscow supported national liberation movements, it also supported terrorism. They intentionally mix terrorism and national liberation movements.

[Posuvalyuk] Personally, I do not favor denouncing the past. We have to look forward to the future or evaluate the present. The situation did not change in Russia only. It changed in the Arab World and in the Middle East. We are now calling for the development of relations with these countries in a concerted manner and on the basis of mutual benefit. The most important aspect is that such relations should have a practical effect. As for the political aspects, let alone the ideological ones, they do not exist at all. When there is an opportunity to develop relations with the Arab countries on the basis of mutual benefit, we will take it. We are also calling for developing

our relations with Israel. Yet, we repeat that we do not want any confrontation and we are not looking for enemies either in the Middle East or in any other part of the world.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] There is an opinion that third world countries, including ours, were victims to the confrontation between East and West.

[Posuvalyuk] I can say that it seems that some of the area's leaders followed the spirit of the cold war between U.S. and the Soviet Union at that time.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Did Egypt play a leading role in this respect?

[Posuvalyuk] Egypt is a great country with historical, intellectual, political and spiritual capabilities. These capabilities make it implausible that Egypt should become a speck of dust and become subject to influences even during the times when the influence of the superpowers on Egypt was really great. I agree with you that Egypt played a leading role in the Arab world and in Africa. Yes, it was influenced, but we can not say that it was a victim. Egypt is a big country that plays a leading role in the Arab world, in Africa and in the non-aligned movement. It had Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir whose opinion was heeded; however, in his politics there seemed to be the influence of the two sides, the two superpowers, whose world-wide confrontation had to affect everyone.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Does Moscow follow the tension between Egypt and Sudan? What is its position toward Iran's interference in this issue?

[Posuvalyuk] This is a very private matter. Of course, it is always on our minds. Sometimes we find evidence of disagreement between two sisterly countries such as Egypt and Sudan. They are not only two sisterly countries but also there is more historical integration between them than between any two other Arab countries. I am convinced that they will overcome these difficulties, an outcome for which we sincerely.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How about the role of Iran?

[Posuvalyuk] We do not have many information on this issue.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is your position on relations with Iraq?

[Posuvalyuk] As a permanent member in the United Nations Security Council, we strictly abide by the Council's resolutions. Iraq had very developed relations with the Soviet Union. As an heir to the Soviet Union, we are trying to influence Baghdad in order to eliminate the results of the war, and in order to get Baghdad to implement the Council's resolutions. This will shake the current stagnation in the Russian-Iraqi relations. Now that the situation is tense again, we are making contacts with the Iraqis to try to convince Baghdad that it is important to implement the resolutions as they are, above all, for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

Relations With Saudi Arabia

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How do you describe the current relations with Saudi Arabia?

[Posuvalyuk] These relations have gotten off to a very good start. Political contacts are very regular and confidence is building. The relations have undergone expansion and consolidation as a result of the 1991 and 1992 changes in the former Soviet Union and in Russia and also as a result

of abandoning the rigid ideological structures in Russian policy, as well as the doubts on the part of the Saudis towards Moscow's policies of the past. I would like to add that confidence does not come overnight. It needs time. We are in that process now and we are progressing rapidly. Kozyref's visit helped us raise that curtain a bit and see what can be done, and not just in the political arena. The possibilities are numerous and varied in the tangible matters of credit, economy and finance.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Crimes Against Students in CIS Go 'Unpunished'
92AF1015A Algiers MAG 7 in French 12 Jul 92 p 10

[Article by Abdellah Akdim (MAP): "North Africans in Russia: Unpunished Crimes"—first paragraph is MAG 7 introduction]

[Excerpt] The North African student community in the former USSR is facing the insecurity that prevails in the new independent republics and feels it is increasingly becoming a target for muggers.

In fact, every month since last January foreign students have been attacked by small groups, some of whom are racists while others are looking for dollars, the currency that opens all doors in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities. Apart from these murders, the North African student community is perturbed by the passive attitude of local authorities in looking for the authors of these crimes. No murderer is ever found, neither those who cold-bloodedly murdered the Moroccan student Khaled El Kaissi, last December in Minsk, nor those who recently killed two Libyan students in Moscow. A number of deaths are still shrouded in mystery.

Two Guinean students exasperated by the indifference of Ukrainian legal authorities recently took two Ukrainian citizens as hostages, demanding the arrest of the man who, the day before, had murdered one of their friends after a quarrel about who should get into a taxi. The promises made by a personal representative of the Ukrainian president, Leonid Kratchuk, were not enough, and things might have come to a diplomatic crisis between Guinea and Ukraine if the Guinean Ambassador in Moscow had not rushed on location to obtain the release of the two Ukrainians.

Last 12 May, which coincided with the Aid El-Adha holiday and the first anniversary of Boris Yeltsin's accession to the supreme office of the Russian Federation, young Algerians had arranged to go swimming at a lake in St. Petersburg. Chant Fethi, from Constantine, drowned. His friends alerted the militia (the police), but the militia estimated that this was a job for the civilian rescue department, which in turn took the pretext that this was a holiday. The victim's body was found only the following day, Saturday, by the civilian rescue department, much to the Algerian students' distress.

Investigations are quick to start, but they are often closed with no result. Would that be the case if a U.S. or a Norwegian citizen were murdered in Moscow? This is the question asked by Lahcen M., an Algerian student in the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States]. One of his fellow students confided that he always carries a weapon when he travels, to be prepared for the worst. North African students no longer worry that they now will have to pay for their studies, or that the new

independent states will no longer grant them scholarships; rather, they worry about insecurity and about the indifference of the police, who no longer react as they used to.

Arab diplomats in Moscow say that the capital of the former Soviet Union used to be one of the safest cities in the world. No murders, no muggings, no thefts. The omnipresent militia was watching, and the courts would punish the slightest offense. Today, all agree that economic changes are at the root of this outburst of violence essentially directed at [text cuts off here].

[Box, p 10]

An Algerian Killed in a Restaurant

A young Algerian soldier, Bouabdellah Larbi, was knifed to death in Odessa, Ukraine, by Armenians who also wounded a Libyan student, we learned from Algerian student sources in the Russian capital.

Bouabdellah, 23, had come to Odessa for a training period in one of the Ukrainian academies; together with friends, an Algerian and two Libyans, and two Russian girls, he went to a restaurant where he had a quarrel with an Armenian who was demanding that the two girls should follow him. Bouabdellah intervened and pushed away the Armenian. Displeased, the latter called on friends to assist him; they must have waited until the North Africans left the restaurant to prevent them from taking a taxi. There was a fight. Bouabdellah was mortally wounded in the heart with a knife; his Libyan friend suffered serious knife wounds in the back and in the stomach.

Bouabdellah is the second Algerian victim in the CIS within a month.

The Ukrainian judicial authorities have ordered an investigation, and the body of the victim was brought back to Algiers.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Labor's Influence on Hamas, Fatah Conflict
*92IAE0480B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 5 Jul 92 p 4*

[Article by 'Abd-al-Jabbar 'Adwan]

[Text] The recent conflicts between the Fatah and Hamas movements have so far remained confined to the Gaza Strip, where the Intifadah was born and grew to become the pillar of the region. This geographic confinement of the conflicts harbors several indications as to the future of the Intifadah in its birth place and to the feudal type relations prevailing in the Strip. Because it is physically remote from mainstream sources of contact and information, the Strip is more susceptible to disputes and internecine fighting. Or, so some people believe.

Previous disputes between Fatah and Hamas, in the time preceding the Israeli elections, were not characterized by the present wild fanaticism. In those times it was possible to resolve issues with an agreement between both sides which would be declared in a "Covenant of Honor" and would regulate the situation, keeping a lid on disputes. [However,] following the proclamation of the Covenant of Honor, the leadership of the Hamas movement abroad would deny that such a covenant existed. When Hamas leaders and key men in the Gaza Strip were then asked about the facts of the situation, they said they know nothing, and wished it is true that there were such a covenant. When asked again why they did they not know, they said that the Hamas situation in the Strip is such that its local leaders are the last ones to know about such reports and developments in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Palestine. Hamas leaders in Gaza have reiterated that they are the last to know, which can also be said about other political forces in Gaza Strip.

The news of that [another] Covenant of Honor has been signed, leading to a rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah supporters in the Strip, has met with general approval. Joint celebrations greeted it in Rafah and elsewhere, demonstrating that the cadres on both sides want to rise above political disputes. The credit for this goes to "tribalism" in the Strip where in the same house one brother might be a Fatah supporter, while another brother is a Hamas supporter. Every individual has a relative in an opposite camp, so it is inconceivable that fighting among them should escalate. However, the speedy rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas in the Strip, and the Hamas leaders' positive response in Gaza, apparently has not pleased certain people abroad, particularly since Gaza is the birthplace of Hamas and the Jihad Organization. The Israeli elections and the Labor Party's and Rabin's victory have led to the spread of the illusion that a peaceful settlement, which Hamas opposes in theory, is imminent. The day following the elections, member of the Hamas hard-core organization "Battalions of Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam" were writing threatening letters to Fatah cadres and delivering them to their homes. This was accompanied with a show of arms and occasional gunfire as a means of lending credibility to the threat.

The threatening letters were addressed personally to each individual. Briefly, the threatening letters said that Hamas (in Gaza) had received details of the "monstrous" plan prepared by Fatah abroad to assassinate some Islamic figures in the Strip. The message said that if the plan were carried out, "bullets will be met by bullets, and the response to the ax will be with the gun and with fire. You will then be sorry for the day your mothers gave birth to you."

In addition to receiving the details of this "monstrous plan," although it claims to be the last one to know, Hamas in Gaza also received other information from abroad in this regard. The threatening letters say: "We urge you to return to the right path." This appears to be the crux of the matter; it is also the objective of those

who invented the "monstrous plan" of assassinations. Of course, Fatah's supporters responded with some statements denying the existence of a liquidation plan, and with other statements threatening retaliation and accusing Hamas of being an agent.

Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas activist in Gaza, along with others, did not deny—as they used to in the past—that Hamas had circulated the threatening letters. Here we report to you verbatim what al-Zahhar told our correspondent: "Before the Intifadah, magazines published by Fatah made threats and leveled accusations against some Hamas elements, including Shaykh Isma'il al-Khatib, who was assassinated shortly afterwards. Information was then received from Tunis about a plan to assassinate some Hamas supporters, including Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz [name as published]. In fact, there was a plan to assassinate him before the Intifadah started." Al-Zahhar said that a seventh statement was issued by Fatah threatening him personally. Continuing, he said: "Reports have been received from internal and external sources indicating that Fatah is preparing a similar plan against Hamas supporters. In response, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam groups sent out warning and threatening letters. This was an attempt to forestall any plans to attack figures supporting Hamas. These messages, which were sent out, were a kind of a conditional threat which said 'if you attack then we will attack.' Fatah supporters saw this an insult to them, and so they sent out strange threatening letters to the pro-Hamas figures. These letters contained a language that only aimed at escalating the situation and making threats; however, this is not the final battle. They should leave some room for reconciliation."

In fact, the messages of both sides are disgraceful. But addressing the message to Fatah supporters personally is far too serious to be considered merely an attempt at intimidating the alleged [authors] of this "monstrous plan." The question is: Who supplied al-Zahhar and Hamas the information about this plan? Dr. al-Zahhar was one of those who welcomed the news of the Covenant of Honor referred to earlier. Continuing to speak with our correspondent, al-Zahhar reiterated that the report about the Covenant of Honor is fabricated. Al-Zahhar added: "There is a direct connection with the fabricated report. I believe that the report regarding the alleged agreement between Hamas and Fatah was a cover-up for assassinations they were intending to carry out according to their plans." But the denial then came from Hamas in Jordan. Jordan's Hamas was the source that uncovered the plan to liquidate Hamas figures.

Thus, the picture becomes quite clear: Gaza's Hamas is happy about the news of a Covenant of Honor being signed with Fatah and celebrates this occasion. Then Jordan's Hamas issues a denial of the report. With the emergence of the Israeli elections results and the illusion that a peaceful solution is imminent, Jordan's Hamas alerted Gaza's Hamas to the assassination plan, among whose targets was Dr. al-Zahhar. Elements from Gaza's

Hamas distributed threatening letters addressed personally to Fatah figures. Fatah responded with similar letters and statements. The Israeli radio and television picked up the story and carried it several times in their Arabic and Hebrew news bulletins that spoke about a PLO plan to liquidate Hamas. The Israeli army arrested 50 of Fatah followers in the Strip.

The Gaza poor, who sometimes have nothing to eat other than tree leaves and bear a deep-seated hatred for the Israeli occupation, now read on the walls strange slogans and accusations. National institutes in the Strip have issued a statement appealing to the Palestinian forces in the occupied territories to yield to reason and logic in dealing with one another. These statements say: "We in the institutes reject mental and political terror and the policy of liquidation because of differences of opinion, and call on everybody to stop trading accusations and threats here and there." Furayh Abu-Middayn, member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, said: "The atmosphere in the Gaza Strip is very tense and extremely dangerous. Any spark could cause it to explode. What we fear most is the Israeli authorities resorting to fishing in troubled waters."

Yasir 'Abd-Rabbu on Elections, Security

[92AE0480A AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Jul 92]

[Interview with Yasir 'Abd-Rabbu, PLO Executive Committee member and head of the Information Department, with Muhammad 'Ali al-Qulaybi in Tunis; date not given]

[Text] Yasir 'Abd-Rabbu, PLO Executive Committee member and head of the Information Department, in an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT stressed that there is now a better opportunity to seriously pursue the peace process following the downfall of the Likud government. He said if the Labor Party wishes to open a new chapter it is called upon to understand the motives and the reasons that have led to the failure of the Likud in its options that are based on procrastination and rejection of a peaceful settlement.

The following is full text of the interview:

[Al-Qulaybi] The Palestinian leadership reportedly participated with members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks in drafting the election law for the occupied territories, a copy of which is supposed to be handed over to the Israeli delegation during the next session of bilateral talks to be held in Rome. What are the most important features of this law?

[Abd-Rabbu] We are still studying several proposals and projects regarding the election system in the occupied territories in order to elect a Palestinian legislative assembly representing the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. No final decision has yet been taken regarding the appropriate system.

Basically we are now discussing the political preparations for this step through preparing the ground inside the occupied territories in order to develop the question of elections into a large-scale political and popular operation. We are also in contact with the parties concerned on the Arab and international levels, including the EC countries and a number of international bodies and institutions concerned with defending human rights in order to take part in this political campaign. From our standpoint, this is a major battle whose real objective is to transfer power from the occupation authorities to the Palestinian people. This issue should enjoy the widest support and understanding, particularly within the ranks of the Palestinian people.

The question of elections should not be treated as an administrative matter. If negotiations are resumed in the coming weeks, following the formation of an Israeli government, we will submit a detailed plan regarding elections. The plan should be linked to other necessary measures to ensure its success. Foremost among these measures is the final halting of settlement building in Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. There should also be an agreement on beginning the withdrawal of the occupation forces from Palestinian territories under an impartial international supervision. These preliminary steps should be a condition to beginning the election process.

Briefly, our position is not just to call for elections as an end in itself. Rather, the elections step should be a link in the chain of steps leading to Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of an elected independent Palestinian state having full powers over the land, water, and the right to legislate. Jerusalem should be part of these arrangements since we categorically reject the repartitioning of the Palestinian territories in the manner the occupation is now doing by building settlements aimed at isolating Jerusalem and separating the northern part of the West Bank from its southern part. We also reject the calls by some Labor Party leaders for treating the Gaza Strip separately from the rest of the occupied lands. If they want repartitioning, then we should go back to the original 1947 partitioning resolution. We will deal with the question of Palestinian territories only as one entity and one people.

[Al-Qulaybi] What will your position be if Israel rejects the elections?

[Abd-Rabbu] If Israel rejects the elections we have ideas about carrying them out unilaterally. It will then be necessary to ensure the required international understanding and support for this step.

[Al-Qulaybi] How do the chances of success of the coming bilateral talks appear with the Labor Party coming to power in Israel, particularly following Yitzhaq Rabin's statements rejecting negotiations on the question of establishing an independent Palestinian state and his disinclination to negotiate directly with the PLO?

[Abd-Rabbu] Judging from our experience in dealing with the Labor party, the soft language it is using hides behind it the real stand that is essentially hostile to the Palestinian people's right, particularly its right to self-determination. It is true that there are differences between the Likud and the Labor, but all the Zionist parties usually show readiness to come to an understanding with the Arab countries and to adapt to the U.S. policy requirements and strategic objectives in the area. But these parties share a common stand based on denying the Palestinian people's basic rights.

The Labor Party's language is multi-faceted. They talk about two kinds of settlements, a security settlement and a political settlement. And in order to justify procrastination over achieving a settlement they talk about peace that is linked to security measures.

On our part there is no difference between any kind of settlement; we refuse to enter into this categorization. Settlement building should stop completely in all the occupied territories. Dismantling the settlements and moving them out of the Palestinian territories is a principal issue on the table of negotiations and part of the arrangements for the transitional stage.

On the other hand, Israeli statements which Rabin is now reiterating and which we have heard throughout the years of occupation regarding the link between peace and security, are a justification to obstruct peace and to impose the alleged security at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights and of withdrawal from the occupied territories.

It is we who need security more than the Israelis; we need complete and comprehensive guarantees, arrangements of a mandatory nature under effective international supervision. We are prepared to reach a comprehensive and tight security agreement between us and them under an international aegis to guarantee our security and theirs. But this should be established on one single basis of total withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories, foremost of which is Jerusalem, and dealing with our people on equal footing to ensure that they exercise their right to self-determination and independence unconditionally and without pressure.

Security is one of the issues on which agreement can be reached. Our experience of the past 40 years has taught us that security cannot be achieved through expansion. Security cannot be achieved at the expense of other people's lands, especially in the age of technology and IBMs. Security is guaranteed by fair and balanced political arrangements between the parties and by guaranteeing the equal rights of all sides in accordance with UN resolutions. Any agreement or arrangement that detracts from the Palestinian people's right will not last long and will be likely to collapse, which consequently would lead to the collapse of any arrangements or security measures.

[Al-Qulaybi] How do you explain Palestinian optimism over the Labor Party's victory in the elections?

[Abd-Rabbu] We can describe this optimism as guarded optimism. First, we must recognize the actual position taken by the Labor Party made evident through its actions on the ground, its policies, and its attitude at the negotiating table. We are afraid that the soft language is for the purpose of wooing a public well aware that Likud policies have plunged the country into domestic and foreign crises. Under the Likud, Israel lived in a state of war on more than one front; war against the Intifadah in the West Bank and Gaza, war in southern Lebanon, a domestic economic war with the waves of Soviet immigrants, and a political war because of insistence on giving priority to settlement building at the expense of political settlement. All of which has led to strained relations with Washington and the initiation of the battle of loan guarantees.

All these factors have led to a large section of voters turning their support away from the Likud. Will the Labor Party respond to the voters' will, or will it return to the policy of prevarication and soft language with the aim of ameliorating some of these crises, but not solving them? Especially the relations crisis with Washington, in order to obtain the desired loan guarantees without any political return? The litmus test is the Labor government's actual stand on the question of settlements.

[Al-Qulaybi] The invitation you addressed to Rabin immediately after his party won the elections to hold direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO was rejected by him. He countered it by a proposal to grant the Palestinians autonomy that is provided for under the Camp David Accords, while [Israel] maintains control of defense, foreign policy, and settlements. What is your comment on this?

[Abd-Rabbu] As far as we are concerned, the concept of transitional arrangements exactly means arrangements for the total withdrawal of the Israeli occupation. There are no transitional arrangements in the international concept, not even in the Camp David Accords' concept which we did not approve, that consolidate and perpetuate occupation. The PLO addressed an invitation to the Labor Party and its government for direct contact and negotiations because we believe that the Likud's policy of burying its head in the sand during the past 15 years, and before that, the denial by previous Labor governments of the Palestinian people's existence, its role, and its leadership, have all collapsed in the face of the Intifadah's realities and achievements.

If they want a real settlement, the door is open for directly dealing with the PLO leadership. The meeting that took place between the negotiating Palestinian delegation and the leadership in Amman before the Israeli elections was a message to the Israelis that Shamir's allegations about his accomplishment of separating the Palestinian people in the occupied territories from their leadership are illusory and false, and that all the people in the occupied Palestinian territories and their leadership address a peace message with one voice to the Israeli people so that through elections they will decide whether

they too will respond to the call of peace. Henceforth, no one will be able to disrupt the open and clear relationship between the people, the delegation, and the leadership. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the peaceful Palestinian policy and the Palestinian involvement in the peace negotiations, despite certain conditions which we considered unfair, have led to the isolation of Shamir's government and the weakening of its position before the Israeli public. On the international level, our positive and realistic policy, which is also based on the continuity and solidarity of the Intifadah, has also contributed to the downfall of the Likud government and, consequently, to ending its option of rejecting peace and reconciliation.

If the Labor Party wishes to open a new page, it is called upon to absorb this lesson in the first place. We are not begging for meetings with anybody. We do not consider peace a gratuity to be granted to the Palestinian people. Peace is in the interest of both sides. It is the meeting point between the Israeli public's stand, as was expressed in the elections, and the Palestinian people's unanimous stand under the PLO's leadership. It is important to point out here that following the downfall of the Likud government there is even a better chance to pursue peace seriously and effectively. In order that this opportunity will not be lost, the Arabs must seriously be prepared to seize it. This would call for seeking a comprehensive Arab meeting that would chart the Arab move and the steps we are to follow in the negotiations. This should also ensure that Israel will not deal with each party separately, and that the conditions and terms of a comprehensive solution are guaranteed. For this reason we have called for a seven-nation meeting that would include the four countries concerned with the political settlement, namely Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, and the Arab brothers in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and in Arab Maghreb, in order to lay down the basis of future action.

JORDAN

Political Parties, Upcoming Elections Analyzed

92AE0520A Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Jul 92 p B2

[Unattributed article: "Husayn Prefers Them in the Parliament"]

[Text] After the total failure of the democratic experiment that took place six months earlier in Algeria and the military seized the Muslim fundamentalist government, the Arab newspapers are concentrating on the democratic experiment Jordan is planning shortly to conduct. We are not speaking of elections to the degree of those in Syria or Libya, in which the leader wins a 99.98-percent majority, but on real elections, with polling booths, multiple parties, and almost unconstrained propaganda. Unlike Egypt, Tunisia, and other countries, Jordan will permit the Islamic parties and movements to unite and participate in the parliamentary elections.

After numerous meetings of the lower house of parliament, primarily of its judicial council, the "law of the political parties for the year 1991" was approved, which is the law for multiple parties. The law is destined to go into effect shortly, following approval by the upper house and after King Husayn signs it for the first time since he forbade the existence of parties in 1975. Forty-three of 52 members of the lower house who were present at the meeting supported the law, following a series of discussions behind closed doors.

Jordan is planning to hold its first multiparty elections since 1954 in November 1993. Approximately 65 parties, reflecting the entire ideological spectrum in Jordan, await this legislation in order to freely unite.

The Muslim Brothers faction is the only faction currently operating in Jordan's house of representatives, after it was permitted to become organized as a party in the last elections in 1989 (the rest of the parliamentary delegates ran as independents). By grace of the house chairman, 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyyat, who is in the faction, meetings are being conducted in a tone sympathetic to the Islamic tendency.

Eleven Islamic parties are planning to run in the parliamentary elections, and the most important of them, the Muslim Brothers, is currently trying to convince them to unite into one Islamic coalition that could even double the number of Muslim delegates in parliament, change the character of the country, and put a halt to the peace process with Israel. Currently, the Muslim Brothers faction has 22 delegates in parliament (out of a total of 80), and another 11 that are identified with them.

The main Islamic fundamentalist parties are the Jordanian Islamic party, the al-Tahrir party, the Dar al-Qur'an group, the Islamic Jihad movement, with all of its splinter-groups, al-Takfir wal-Hijrah, the organization of the oppressed on Earth, and Mu'tazilah, a mystic group of ascetics.

In paragraph three of the Law of Political Parties, which contains 28 paragraphs, a party is defined as follows: "Any political organization comprised of a group of Jordanians in accordance with the constitution, whose purpose is participation in political life...and operates through peaceful ways and legal means."

Members of the national parties have already announced that it is their intention to turn to Jordan's high court of justice to illegalize the religious parties, which, are hostile, in their words, to the democratic idea, and, therefore, should not be seen as legitimate parties in Jordanian politics. The Jordanian judicial registration of legitimacy has yet to decide this issue, especially in light of paragraph 21, which determines that "the party will be bound to the principles of the constitution...to the

supremacy of the rule of law, ideological pluralism, and the negation of violence and discrimination."

Paragraph 4 of the law permits political organizing for Jordanians alone, and thus prevents the Palestinian movements outside of Jordan from becoming Jordanian parties. But they are getting wiser and are including Jordanian Palestinians in their institutions.

Paragraph 19 determines that a party may receive donations and grants only from Jordanian citizens, and individual donations may not exceed 5,000 dinars (approximately 16,000 shekels) per year. The government required that membership in a party be limited to those age 19 and above. The parliament opposed this and determined that party members may be age 18 and above.

The second track is that of those close to the king, including, among others, the Progress and Justice party (the party of former Prime Minister 'Adnan Abu-'Awdah), The Covenant party, The Future party, and The Nation party. Twenty-three parties are identified with the king, and each party is tied to a central personality among those close to him. Until now, this track has not succeeded in uniting as a central bloc in parliament, and even now it is not succeeding in uniting into one party as the elections approach.

In the closed meeting of parliament, those of this tendency objected to the legislation of the multiparty law, out of a realistic evaluation that they would lose opposite the popular Islamic movements.

Eight delegates from this stream, who have united in parliament under the leadership of delegate Ahmad al-'Awadi, argued that the experiment in full democratic elections should be delayed until the intricate relations with the Palestinians are made into some sort of confederative arrangement and achieves a demographic balance in its wake.

They argue further that the economy of Jordan is in such bad condition that the election campaign and the agitation that it will arouse will only disrupt order and will shake the regime. Their arguments were rejected.

It is interesting that a few delegates of the Muslim Brothers also objected in parliament to the multiparty law, albeit for other reasons. Even though this law is destined to pave the way for the religious movements, there were those in this track who opposed it on principle and argued that it would do more harm than good. 'Abd-al-Baqi Jammu argued fervently that the idea of party pluralism is a western idea in opposition to Islam and, therefore, should not be accepted.

One of the reasons for King Husayn's support of the experiment in full democracy is the recognition that it is better that the fundamentalists, which endanger his regime, deliver their messages in public rather than going underground, for then, their danger will be even greater.

The extent of danger became clear to the king with the discovery of the Islamic underground, Jaysh Muhammad (Muhammad's Army), last year, whose members planned to kidnap a member of the royal family and sow fear and terror in focal points of the government. Jordan is similar to Egypt, Algeria, and Lebanon from the aspect of religious awakening. In it, too, are those who are repenting their misdeeds and planting doubts on the legitimacy of the government, and with great vigor. Indeed Husayn, in their opinion, is a direct descendant of the prophet Muhammad, but his government was born in the hands of foreign, imperialist, and Christian elements.

Husayn prefers to take the risk out of the same hope that was in the heart of the president of Algeria, Chedli Bendjedid, at the end of 1991: that Islam would be neutralized or would crumble in parliament at the hands of the other parties, especially since Husayn has the constitutional option to disperse parliament, as he has done many times in the past. The Jordanian constitution, and thus the law of the parties, grant the king and those who conduct his affairs a number of emergency authorizations that will enable him to rule in the course of things, or so they hope.

With this gamble, Husayn succeeded, to a certain extent, in the last elections, which were held in November 1989, the first general elections in 22 years. The Islamic bloc then won, as previously stated, a considerable number of seats (22 for the Muslim Brothers faction, and another 11 for the Islamic independents), but this bloc crumbled, to a great extent, by the other blocs, and its influence is not felt on the issues of importance to the king, such as the peace process and relations with the United States. The Islamic delegates are boycotting the government of Zayd Bin-Shakir, the prime minister. They would participate in it if they carried more weight, at least in internal affairs.

The third stream is the left wing, which has lost much of its popularity since the '50's and '60's. Ten parties belong to this stream, the more prominent among them being: the Jordanian Communist party, with its factions; the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity party, which is identified with Nayif Hawatimah's Democratic Front; and the Jordanian Revolutionary Nation party, which is identified with George Habash's Popular Front.

The fourth and final stream is that of the pan-Arabian parties, among them the Socialist Arab Ba'th party, under Syrian leadership, Nasserite movements, the al-Tali'ah movement, and the al-Qawmiyyun al-'Arab movement.

While the law has not yet taken effect, Palestinian and Jordanian movements and organizations have begun, in recent months, to circumvent the prohibition against institutionalized political organizing, and have opened branches in Rabat 'Amman and other cities under the names of people in the legal profession, corporations, or front companies.

Habash's and Hawatimah's fronts have hastened, in recent weeks, to give themselves party names, under the assumption that the election law will guarantee them, retroactively, legitimacy. The Fatah movement, in contrast, has continued on its consistent policy for years, and thinks that breaking away from its military mechanism and becoming a civilian party like it is is an abandonment of the "armed struggle," and that the former two also have no involvement in the internal political life of the country.

KUWAIT

Assistance Rejected to Countries Supporting Iraq 92P40231A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 2 Jul 92 p 5

[Text] Kuwait, AL-HAYAH—The Kuwaiti National Assembly (Parliament) has decided that Kuwait will deny financial assistance to the countries that supported Iraq during its occupation of Kuwait. The official and information organs in Kuwait named these countries as Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, and Mauritania, in addition to the PLO. These have been listed as countries partial to the regime of Saddam Husayn.

The decisions of the National Assembly are not binding on the government, which is presented with the Assembly's decision before it is submitted for approval by the Amir of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah. In its session two days ago, the Assembly rejected a proposal to ban the employment of Palestinians and citizens of the four countries mentioned above in government jobs. After having studied the proposal, a special committee of the Assembly found that the ban would be difficult to implement.

Report Warns of Inflation, Financial Hardship 92AE0499A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Jul 92 p 12

[Report from Kuwait: "The Nonperforming Loans Law Could Delay Bank Mergers in Kuwait"]

[Text] The Kuwaiti economic report AL-SHAL warned of the potential for more financial hardship in the country and pointed out that government service has recently become bloated despite the privatization policy and edicts to control government spending.

In another development, informed sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the promulgation of the Non-Performing Loans Law in Kuwait, and the fact that bank problems are essentially behind them, has indefinitely relegated the issue of domestic bank mergers to the back burner.

The sources added that the first indication that officials are not seriously considering such mergers is that no government agency has been clued to do a relevant study even though the issue bears a great deal of study and research. The mergers, according to these sources, were

to have taken place by the end of 1991 but now, in mid-1992, the issue is mentioned only occasionally, reinforcing the belief that it was brought up in the past only in connection with Loans Law passage in the National Council.

The sources emphasized that the central bank has lost a major and important aspect of its oversight over banks as the latter divested of their non-performing loans. This is especially true of banks that used to receive substantial central bank subsidies to cover their shortfalls.

The sources added that the return of sovereignty to banks, especially those in the which the government owned a small share, has made it more difficult to bring up the merger issue.

On the subject of increased spending, AL-SHAL weekly report said that the two decrees establishing a Grievance Bureau and organizing police assistants will result in an increase in the number of government workers and wages, not to mention redundancies.

AL-SHAL discussed the status of the stock market, alluding to the release of year-end figures by the National Bank of Kuwait which had a capital-share of approximately 30 percent of firms listed on the market on 1 Aug 90—the eve of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The report added that once its General Assembly meeting is over next Sunday, the National Bank of Kuwait will be ready to handle stock market listings and trades.

The report said that "having done a preliminary analysis of Bank figures, we can imagine the shape of financial statements to be released by other banks, and their most salient developments." The National Bank had to liquidate assets it held with other banks and financial institutions worth some 660 million Kuwaiti dinars in order to meet its obligations during the occupation and post-occupation periods. Because of that, and other factors to a lesser degree, its total assets shrank by about 23 percent. Its holdings of government securities rose in 1991 to about 1.16 billion dinars, or 40 percent of total assets, compared with only 476 million dinars in 1989, or a mere 12 percent of total assets. AL-SHAL attributes this, in most probability, to the new non-performing loans program and to a decline in aggregate assets as a result of the occupation and its aftermath, causing ratios to rise faster than absolute figures. It seems that the National Bank was not as deeply entangled as other banks in borrowing by citizens. Bonds issued to the order of the National Bank are valued at 656 million dinars, compared with 900 million dinars in average issues to other banks.

On the liabilities side, obligations to other banks and financial institutions dropped in tandem with declines in National Bank deposits with each, underscoring that the assets were used to satisfy comparable liabilities. Client deposits dropped by only 6 percent—another indication that the Bank maintains its clients's trust in spite of difficult overall conditions, which may not be true in the case of other banks.

AL-SHAL explained that National Bank has proved its outstanding performance by realizing profits that are lofty by any standard. Its industrial profits amounted to about 41 million dinars, about 41 percent of paid capital, or 41 fils per share at nominal value. The Bank has authorized distributions [from realized profits] of 25 percent in cash and 10 percent in stock dividends. Combined, this is the highest declared dividend by a domestic firms and one of the highest in Bank history.

AL-SHAL concluded by saying that the situation will be different with the other banks that will ask the central bank to handle their distributions, perhaps for the last time.

LIBYA

Editorial on Abolition of Islamic Call Society

LD0607081992 Tripoli JANA in English
1740 GMT 5 Jul 92

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Tripoli, Nasir [Jul] 5, JAMAHIRYAH NEWS AGENCY—Under the title 'Before Liquidation, This Is the Last Notice', the newspaper AL JAMAHIRYAH today published an editorial saying 'the approval by the General People's Congress abolishing the Islamic Call Society and for the matter to be submitted to the Basic People's Congresses came after we realised the truth about today's Muslims and that their holy struggle (jihad) was a lie which cannot be believed and that any pence spent under this item represents, religiously, an unlawful act. We said that the struggle is an internal struggle for development. Accordingly, the assets of the jihad fund should be switched to development projects for the benefit of the Libyans including the use of fund's money towards the completion of the phases of the great manmade river and the maintenance of its systems... apart from [word indistinct] one question would lead us to another...jihad with whom...against whom ...if it is against the infidel the later are closer to us than those of the holy book, suna, consensus and qiyas...you have only to compare the stance taken by one side or the other with us.

But if the jihad is against the Jews, negotiations are continuing and there many of those who welcomed the results of the Israeli elections...what jihad against the Jews...what jihad for the liberation while there is mutual recognition and contacts were going on by all means of communications to present congratulations...which jihad the money from the jihad fund should be allocated unless it is a jihad between Muslim countries.

There is no jihad at all and the General People's Congress has done the right thing in submitting to the People's Congresses the proposal abolishing the Islamic Call Society and allocating its money for the benefit of the Libyan people...they are all seeking mutual interests and there is no meaning for jihad in this case unless this

term has another meaning...jihad ended since the era of Khaled ben al Walid since which many events took place.

We say what we are certain about in this subject...also, we said what is right and correct about the Arab Revolutionary Committees regarding their reality and nature...we refused for this institution to continue because it will only bring problems to the Libyans and waste their time and effort...

Furthermore, we told you the truth about the international mathaba whose founders turned themselves into governments...and some of them went as far as to doing deals and capitulate hence it real reason of being disappeared...

Today the only test is analysis for our ideas...and so as not to be accused of refusing everything which can be rectified...the Arab People's Congress has become, with all its component elements, a travel and hotel agency and talkative faces which confused all interpreters machines in many non speaking countries chosen according to whether conditions and other things there...the expenses we covered for the travel, services and [word indistinct] for the Arab people reached over 150 million Libyan dinars (half a billion dollars) a sum if converted it would have been a good investment loan only developing countries would know its use.

The idea of the Arab People's Congress was great...it was for it to start as an interim Arab parliament representing the Arab People's Parties, organisations and active forces...the assumption was that all decisions by this [word indistinct] would implemented in the whole Arab world for it consists, supposedly, of custodians of Arab masses [word indistinct] or delegates for them being their extension and roots who must obey the decision and instructions of the Congress...the idea was great but the Congress did not accomplish the required task...as its members sought to convince us of their productive work showing us some banners claiming that they were a council of culture and inventions...had it not been for the greatness of this idea, we would have had liquidated it once we discovered that it consisted almost of marginal and insignificant organisations and parties but by contrast most effective parties and organisations either withdrew or froze their activities with the Arab People's Congress.

While we demanded the abolition of the aforesaid organisations, we serve the last notice to Congress to rectify its position and restructure itself in a manner including all sections of the Arab people and its parties, institutions and active forces. However, if the Congress continues in its current state, it will be abolished and all its assets confiscated and committees will be forced to wind it up...this is the last notice.

MOROCCO**Appeal Made to Citizens To Vote***92AF1002A Rabat L'OPINION in French 6 Jul 92 pp 1, 3*

[Article by Jamal Hajjam: "Voter Registration: a Prerequisite to Participation in the Decisionmaking Process"]

[Text] Human rights are sacred. The right to vote—a voluntary and personal act—is sacred in more than one respect. First and foremost, it is the very foundation of democracy, once all the safeguards for an honest election are in place.

Moreover, it enables all citizens who meet the legal requirements to accept this responsibility and participate in the process of shaping the nation's democratic image, simply by virtue of the fact that they will be making a direct contribution toward the creation of their elected assemblies.

All Moroccans 20 years of age and over (the campaign to lower the age to 18 is continuing) have the right to vote, but not all are necessarily electors.

To be an elector and qualify to practice this fundamental right, one must first of all enroll in the new voter registration books—a prerequisite for all citizens who wish either to become a candidate or to elect their representative or also—for those persons who have a political affiliation—to serve as inspector or party representative at the polls.

Citizens cannot carry out any of these operations unless they are listed on the voter registration rolls. Hence the importance of the act of registration—one of the symbols of citizenship and the prerequisite for participation in the selection and supervision of those who govern.

The cancellation of the old voter registration rolls—which as everyone knows were incomplete and replete with errors—will serve to encourage our citizens, and especially our young people, to enter their names on the new rolls, which this time will assuredly be prepared openly, in the knowledge that this operation will be placed under the control of the National Commission in charge of supervising the elections and the election boards that will be established at the provincial and local levels.

The elimination of the old lists, which had served as the basis for the previous elections—whose authenticity has always been challenged—is an invaluable step toward the establishment of a genuine democracy. The preparation of new voter rolls has always been one of the basic demands formulated by the democratic parties. What has just been accomplished is therefore an achievement of the people, and an achievement always needs to be preserved. To do so, our citizens have the duty to record their names en masse on the new rolls, as the first step toward political reform and toward a break with a past that was often characterized by fraud and falsification

and plunged the nation into a moral crisis that must be brought to a definitive conclusion.

Voter registration ensures that all citizens who fulfill the legal conditions and will prospectively vote will have a permanent presence on the political scene.

This will not only enable them to choose their elected assemblies but also make a significant contribution to the drafting of the documents that regulate public life, first of all through the instrumentality of their representatives—who are freely elected and constantly under their control—and subsequently in a direct manner, given the fact that we are on the eve of a revision of the existing Constitution: a revision that will be submitted to a referendum.

Of course, the act of registering to vote has nothing to do with the political position a voter will adopt when participating in the electoral process. We are here dealing with a right and a duty at one and the same time.

Once this operation of citizenship and civic duty is accomplished, everyone is free to participate—or not to participate—in the voting, which is a continuing act of sovereignty.

Registering to vote is a right that each and every citizen must exercise in order to be able to use it as needed.

It is therefore important that we turn our attention to the present. The date of 31 July—the last day to register—draws near rapidly, and very little time remains....

Opposition Parties: Elections Will Not Be Fair*LD1407214192 Rabat MAP in English
1312 GMT 14 Jul 92*

[Text] Rabat, July 14 (MAP)—One can hardly believe that electoral operations will be honest and free if they are supervised by the administrative apparatus, said a release by the Organization for a Democratic and Popular Action (OADP-Leftist Opposition).

The release pointed out that the obstacles appeared since last May on the democratic straightening process path have reached such a scale that dialogue alone cannot lower them down, citing in this respect the "sudden suspension" of the arbitration commission and the publishing by the Government of electoral laws that do not provide for the necessary guarantees.

The release noted further that efforts made by the Democratic Block (formed by the OADP, the Istiqlal, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, the Party for Progress and Socialism and the National Union of Popular Forces) are meeting close doors, especially after the disappointing answer the Adviser to the King Ahmed Reda Guedira made to their memorandum.

The democratic parties forming the block have despite this carried on their efforts and accepted to attend the

meetings of the national commission composed of the parties represented in the Parliament and some cabinet members in a bid to safeguard the democratic straightening process, the release said noting that the fact to attend the commission meetings must not be a pretext to impose the *fait accompli*.

For the OADP, if the officials do not understand that the commission must be endowed with the prerogatives needed to enable it genuinely supervise the elections, there would be no harm to ask the national public opinion about the matter.

The OADP release added that in order to restore the citizen's trust and prompt his enthusiasm, it is necessary to put forward genuine and concrete guarantees.

King's Adviser Discusses Elections, OAU

*LD2107125592 Rabat MAP in English
1204 GMT 21 Jul 92*

[Text] Rabat, Jul 21 (MAP)—Adviser to the King Ahmed Bensouda said Morocco insists all citizens born in the Saharan Provinces ought to be on the referendum voting lists.

In an interview published by the London-based AL WASSAT, Bensouda said it did not make sense to give "Polisario" [Popular Front for the Liberation of Sagu el Hamra and Rio de Oro] the right to vote and deny the same right to those who fled Spanish colonization and went north in the Kingdom.

To a would be return of Morocco to the Organization of African Unity, the adviser said the Kingdom would stay away from the OAU as long as the reasons which made it leave are still there stressing however closer bilateral ties with most African countries.

Of major deadlines in Moroccan political life, Bensouda said King Hassan II has made it clear he would see personally to fair and transparent elections to pave the way for genuine democracy.

The adviser also dealt with inter-Arab relations one year after the Gulf War saying it was time to heal wounds and jointly endeavor for better prospects for the Arab nation.

'Hesitation' To Register Due to 'Violations'

92AF1071A Rabat L'OPINION in French 24 Jul 92 p 1

[Editorial by Mohamed Idrissi Kaitouni: "The Elections: Unacceptable Irregularities"]

[Text] The registration process for the new voter lists is under way throughout the kingdom's different provinces. The official statistics show differences between the numbers recorded in rural areas and those in the main towns, where the numbers have been close to expectations, so much so that door-to-door efforts have had to be initiated to register citizens who have reached the legal voting age.

This reticence, which has been observed particularly in the cities, can be explained by the fact that citizens hesitate to involve themselves in the process, all the more so as they see that certain ways of thinking are not ready to change and that irregularities continue to be committed in violation of the law and official instructions.

Such practices, which range from registering more than once—despite the penalties, which can be incurred under the law—to "transfers" of votes from one town to another within the urban communities and to collecting voter cards in exchange for a sum of money, thus constitute a flagrant violation of the law, and make people lose interest and begin to doubt, something the democratic parties are fighting.

These parties, which are aware of their responsibility and their political obligation as citizen organizations, have indeed issued urgent appeals to citizens to do their duty and exercise their right by registering on the new voter lists, which will replace the old, no longer valid lists that must be destroyed.

Registering on the voter lists, which is a duty and an obligation for every citizen, allows him to exercise his constitutional rights because without this registration, he can neither vote nor take part in the governance of public and local affairs through voting nor by running as a candidate in various elections, be they town, professional, or legislative.

But while insisting on the necessity of each citizen putting his name on the new voter lists, the citizen must remain vigilant and report every violation of the law and guarantee the correctness of voting procedures, which start by creating new, clean lists in a climate of total openness, which is indispensable to setting up sincere elections and the establishing credible and genuinely representative assemblies.

The competent authorities should therefore put an end to the irregularities, see to it that the law is enforced, and in particular punish those responsible for these violations who are seeking to do damage to the process that has been begun and are working to compromise and distort democracy, which should be authentic and in accordance with the will of the people.

Voter Registration Proceeding 'Contrary' to Law

92AF1071B Rabat L'OPINION in French 25 Jul 92 p 1

[Editorial by Mohamed Idrissi Kaitouni: "Doing the Utmost"]

[Text] By purely, simply, and definitively voiding the old voter lists, the Moroccan people—for whom this step represents a significant national achievement—hoped to break with the past and enter a new era of genuine democracy and respect for its wishes.

To do this, it was imperative to draw up new voter lists that would give rise to no confusion and contain neither mistakes nor false names. These sound lists, drawn up in the open and according to regular procedures, are the basis upon which all future national elections will rest, and the honesty of those elections will depend on the soundness of these lists.

Thus it is unacceptable to see certain people commit flagrant irregularities and intolerable abuses as they attempt to distort the process, which has been initiated and set the scene to give the advantage to this candidate or that political party.

These irregularities have taken different forms. Thus, notably in the case of the Rabat-Sale and Casablanca urban communities, certain individuals, taking advantage of an incorrect interpretation of the first paragraph of Article 3 of Electoral Law 12-92, have been observed registering on several voter lists in different towns.

Furthermore, this registration, which is supposed to be done on an individual basis by the people involved, has sometimes taken place in groups and, most often, under threat (workers who risk losing their jobs) or for a sum of money given in exchange for the receipt and a photocopy of the national identity card so that later the voting card can be picked up and used in support of the candidate who was responsible for such irregularities.

To be sure, such doings are contrary to the law and its spirit, and the circular letter sent by the ministry of the interior to the relevant authorities expressly censures them, but urgent intervention is necessary to put an end to these abuses, correct mistakes that were made voluntarily, and ensure the preservation of the soundness of the new voter lists.

At a time when everything is done by computer, the interior minister is capable of uncovering the false statements, the multiple registrations, and all sorts of irregularities.

The determination exists so we must now do the utmost because the interest of the Morocco of the future is at stake, a future we want to build and one that must rest on the foundations we are laying today.

'Violations' During Voter Registration Noted

92AF1071C Rabat L'OPINION in French 25 Jul 92 p 4

[Unattributed article: "Voter Registration: Infringements of the Law and Violations of Its Provisions, Spirit, and Content"]

[Text] Since the beginning of registration on the new voter lists, every day the board of inspectors of the Istiqlal Party in Errachidia has received complaints about violations, which have been recorded during the process. Here are some examples:

Regarding redistricting, Interior Ministry agencies systematically chopped regions in which the Istiqlal Party is

in the majority up into several constituencies, putting Istiqlal into the minority in areas where it is mostly in the majority. Thus certain new constituencies have only 60 voters whereas others have 500.

Regarding registration, a single person, on the advice of the authorities, registered his entire family by showing his family card or national identity cards.

Furthermore, the administrative commission is doing door-to-door canvassing to register people even though they do not want to do so.

On the other hand, certain commissions have denied registration for various inconsistent reasons. There is also the absence of maps showing the redistricting. [Instead] government agents tell the person in which district he should register.

The commissions take advantage of registrations on the new [voter] lists to start the campaign with the full knowledge of the authorities. What is more, the latter really give a helping hand on behalf of the progovernment candidate.

The state's cars do not rest. They pick up voters and do their part organizing parties by day and by night.

Illegality is everywhere in the way registration is carried out. A member of the former town council presides over these operations, supported, naturally, by officials of the Interior.

Citizen delegations have gone to the provincial seat to complain about these actions, request an explanation, and see that respect for the law is enforced. But no one receives these delegations. They go home angry and this gives rise to rumors that are often serious. There are violations everywhere and one does not have the impression that they are going to stop.

In the province of Taounat, more specifically in the Tissa circle, the chief of the circle for at least the past two months has been naming candidates. There are 11 towns and each one of them already knows who its chairman and other council members will be. The appointments are made on a financial basis. There are 40,000 dirhams to be chairman, half that amount to be vice chairman, and a bit less to be a counselor. These future "elected officials" have received instructions from the circle chief to run as members of the Popular Movement or independents. Caid, sheikhs, and moqadems have been told to start campaigning now on behalf of Popular Movement [MP] and independent candidates.

What is more, this circle chief said aloud and without the slightest compunction that so-and-so would be chairman of such-and-such a town, that this other so-and-so would be chairman of such-and-such another town, and so forth, and that the vice chairman would be x, y, and z.

Let us not forget that last year, Minister Laenaser chaired a meeting in Tissa and that it was the local

authorities, headed up by the circle chief, the caids, sheikhs, and moqadems who brought the new-style militants to this meeting.

Today in Tissa, all of the posts without exception are filled.

Will the upcoming elections be worse than the preceding ones? There is every reason to think so, given such violations.

In the province of Khouribga, in the town of Beni Zrentel, Ijbari Lahsen was named to supervise registration in districts 8, 9, 10, and 11.

To whomever wanted to listen, he stated that he had received instructions from the caid appointing him the only official in charge of voter registration. He thus touched off frenetic advertising on behalf of a candidate who would run in district 11. By virtue of her position, he also registered his uncle Ben Daouad's wife without her being present and at the same time refused to register Mokhantar Bouabid's wife despite every assurance being made by replying that he only received orders from the caid. Other citizens were not able to register because Ijbari Zrental did not wish it: Among them we should mention Chaou Ben Dahbi, although he is a native of the district and lives there. To be sure, other people registered without being present. His own uncle, for example, who declares from the rooftops that he is the candidate of the local authorities. Furthermore, Moqadem Mrizik Bouazza told residents that that person would be "elected," because he was the authorities' candidate.

In Rabat as well, the violations continue. In the towns of Yacoub El Mansour and Al Aquas, people from one town are being registered in another by using every means and sometimes by acting openly. To such a degree that the new lists are going to resemble the old ones.

One candidate from one majority party has an entire group working for him in the town of Al Aquas. The procedure is a simple one. The underlings collect the national identity cards [CIN], particularly those of the poor, the needy, and the destitute, to register their owners in other towns, notably in Agdal.

They keep the receipts and return the CIN's, to which they add 50 dirhams.

In Yacoub El Mansour, they are still at the stage of making promises, but these are wonderful promises made to the young of Al Aquas so they will register in the town of Yacoub El Mansour. They are promised a job at the Ministry of Health provided instructions from an official of that minister are carried out.

In Taza, voters are registered at the very home of a member of the board of the rural town of Yaldmane. This allows him to campaign on his behalf and at the same time refuse to register those he does not like or do not vote for him and his party, i.e., the Popular Movement.

The new redistricting is not making matters easier, particularly for citizens who want to register. For example, the douar Oulad Mansour and douar Largoub were separated from the town of Mezguiten and assigned to Miknassa East (Sebt Bougellal), i.e., 40 kilometers further away. Let us acknowledge that it is difficult to travel 40 kilometers to register. It was done on purpose, it is said.

In many towns you can register yourself and register others at the same time. But that depends on who the person is and his party.

In the Sahara provinces, notably in Boujdour, you find local authorities at the center of violations. The caid who is in charge of general services for the province convened the administrative commission in the town of Ajraifia to tell it that fishermen and sailors of that town could not register. The latter live on the coast and, according to the redistricting, belong to this town.

The governor told the above-named caid and his khalifa to coordinate the work with the directors of the fishing companies. Following his orders, groups of sailors who had come from Agadir registered in Boujdour. The testimony of the brigadier of the Auxiliary Forces was enough to have residency certificates handed out to those involved. The aim of this operation is to make the governor's candidate win. But another of its aims is to drown the true residents in a flood of seasonal fishermen who are easy to manipulate.

These fishermen go from Tarfaya to Dakhla along the coast and have no connection to the province. They can thus not hope to register on the new voter lists. The six-month residency requirement has not been fulfilled.

The 6 July 1992 meeting lasted from 2200 to 0200 hours and brought together the representatives of the Auxiliary Forces and the National Promotion; Lemzouak Nourdine, the caid in charge of general affairs; Debda Omar, the caid who is connected with the general secretariat; Laaroussi Sidi Ahmed, the caid who is the chief of the Guelta Zemmour center; Filali Ali, the chairman of the rural town of Boujdour; and the representative of the National Self-help Society. Together they decided that the National Promotion representative would provide work certificates for some residents of Laayoune and Tan-Tan to register them in Boujdour, which would allow Filali Ali to win the election.

Furthermore, the governor convened the following sheikhs: Ahl Abdelkader, Samad Cheikh, Bel Mekki Salek, and Rguibi Mohamed, and gave them orders to guide voters according to his own views. Furthermore, he called in Kinane Mohamed Liminie and ordered him to wait to register his family until he had received instructions regarding the name of the constituency.

We certainly see that the violations are the product of the local authorities themselves. The evidence is overwhelming.

'Democratic Bloc' Criticizes Government 'Severely'
92AF0997A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
26-27 Jun 92 p 5

[Article: "Government Severely Criticized by Opposition"]

[Text] On Thursday evening, the leaders of the five Moroccan opposition parties that joined together last month to form the "democratic bloc" severely condemned government policy in every domain and called on young people to mobilize within their movements to "impose the establishment of a real democracy."

With a number of elections due to be organized in the weeks ahead, the political leaders claimed at a rally held in Rabat as part of a "campaign of dialogue with the people" that the government's policy has "increased social disparities and encouraged corruption, abuse of authority, illegal enrichment and the country's indebtedness."

According to Mr. Abderrahman Youssoufi, first secretary general of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP-Progressist), this policy has "resulted in 6 percent of the population cornering 50 percent of the nation's wealth."

The opposition leaders also insisted on the need to establish an "authentic democracy" and called for a "preliminary national dialogue on the constitutional reforms which the authorities plan to introduce in the near future."

Officials of the "democratic bloc" also demanded that 18-year-olds be allowed to vote and 21-year-olds be allowed to stand for elective office, while calling for the release of all "political detainees."

The opposition leaders again demanded creation of an "independent national body" to organize and oversee the upcoming local and national elections from start to finish—all the way from voter registration to announcement of the vote-counts.

Finally, they appealed to the government to cease its "policy of delay" and to work with them to launch a "constructive dialogue" aimed at building an "authentic democracy."

Government Policy To Save Livestock Criticized

92AF1072A Rabat L'OPINION in French 25 Jul 92 pp 1, 3

[Text] The members of the UGAM [General Union of Moroccan Farmers] Executive Committee met in Kenitra recently to study the general situation in Moroccan rural areas and the results of the 1991-92 farm season and its effects.

Their research dealt with problems relating to livestock feed, the farmers' debt to the CNCA [National Agricultural Credit Fund], and the government's failure to take adequate measures, inasmuch as those measures are not

adapted to the situation this year or to its effect on the economy in general and, more particularly, on employment in rural areas.

In their speeches, Mohamed Hassoun, deputy secretary general, and the Executive Committee members emphasized the early start of the year's dry season. This has aggravated the difficulties of livestock breeders and borrowers with respect to fattening operations as a result of the length of the dry season, when pastureland remains in grass. Livestock feed has become scarce and the scarcity has helped raise prices. After costly preparation, the sown fields did not sprout and where they did, plants did not reach maturity.

On 11 February 1992, all farmers were pleased and reassured to hear news of the King's order that the government take the necessary measures to protect livestock and find a solution to the problem of the debt and jobs in rural areas.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the government could not comply with the royal instructions. It confined itself to what it called the emergency program to save livestock. The program did not exceed 100,000 quintals of cicalim and the importation of a limited quantity of barley. These provisions were affected by advance payment and the prolonged wait for delivery, without forgetting the dubious quality of the cicalim delivered.

The government did not budge on the farmers' debt to the CNCA. This fund proceeded as usual by collecting its debts by every possible means.

Given this situation, UGAM published the following bulletin:

1) UGAM reminds officials of the need to take measures in order to deal with the effects of the drought on farmers in terms of their debts, living conditions, livestock, and problems inherent in drinking water;

2) emphasizes the need to comply with the King's instructions contained in his speech in Marrakech on 11 February 1992, including: the creation of jobs in rural areas; the execution of drinking water programs and an intensification of prospecting and drilling; the completion of programs launched in poorer rural communes; the maintenance and construction of roads; a thorough study of the problem of the debt and its rescheduling; and

3) insofar as the livestock problem is concerned, demands urgent intervention to protect livestock and asks for the establishment of a reserve supply of livestock feed, abandoning traditional methods that have turned out to be negative so far.

Within this framework, it is essential to import much more barley and turn it over to livestock breeders at cost price.

4) UGAM stresses the need for measures for next season concerning fertilizer, seed, and phytosanitary products at nonspeculative prices; protests excessive breaks in the water supply in irrigated areas at times when crops have reached the stage of full growth; asks that prices on agricultural products bought by sugar mills and other parties be reviewed to make them fairer; protests levies imposed to help associations that provide no services to farmers; asks that urgent repairs be made in a faulty water system that increases the bill for irrigation water; and asks that efforts be intensified to create pasture land, improve existing pasture, and protect our forests against parasites of all kinds.

5) UGAM expresses its solidarity with Iraqi farmers, proclaims its condemnation of the burning of harvests, and demands justice for Iraqi farmers and their indemnification by those who burn crops, whether accidentally or on purpose.

Nuclear Power, Uranium Exploitation Foreseen

92P40238A *London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic*
27 Jul 92 p 11

[Summary] A study by the Moroccan Ministry of Energy and Mines revealed that the demand for electricity will increase from 6 to 8 percent in the near future. In spite of the fact that long-term expectations are difficult to define, the current situation shows that the demand for electricity is expected to reach 18 billion kW per hour with a capacity of 3,000 MW by the year 2000, and 25 billion kW per hour with a capacity of 4,200 MW by the year 2003. These expectations are of concern to the authorities since productive capacity between the years 2000 and 2005 will not exceed 7 billion kW per hour: 5 billion kW per hour from hydroelectricity and 2 billion kW per hour from coal. The production of natural gas and oil in the western regions and Essaouira and Meskala is still very weak, such that it cannot be considered for these purposes. Likewise, the exploitation of Morocco's shale oil reserves runs into the barrier of rising extraction costs such that it is not competitive with bituminous coal.

Therefore, nuclear energy is becoming an apparent alternative to imported bituminous coal. Morocco is turning all its attention to the 9 million tons of uranium reserves which may possibly be extracted from phosphates. Technical and economic studies have been completed on the establishment of Morocco's first nuclear power station. These studies, supervised since 1984 by the Moroccan National Electricity Office in conjunction with the French firm Sofratom, have reached an important stage. They have chosen Sidi Boulbera, midway between Essaouira and Safi, as the site of the station. The final studies are now underway to ascertain the suitability of this site.

Passport Requirements Eased To Promote Tourism

92AF1027B *Algiers MAG 7 in French* 5 Jul 92 p 8

[Unattributed article: "Morocco: Tourists Without Passports"]

[Text] Citizens from 10 European countries coming to Morocco on organized tours can now enter the country with a mere identity card, because passports are no longer required, we learned from an official source in Rabat.

This applies to French, German, Spanish, Swiss, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Austrian, Finnish, and Icelandic citizens. Citizens from these 10 countries could already enter Morocco without a visa, a decision designed to promote the Moroccan tourism industry.

However, Moroccan tourism professionals regret that the measure does not extend to Italy and the United Kingdom, which provide a significant number of tourists to Morocco, or to Portugal, Belgium, and Holland, which are seen as especially buoyant markets.

Close to 2 million tourists visit Morocco every year. During the first five months of 1992, the tourist flow to Morocco was marked by a strong increase in the number of Italian and Spanish tourists (36 and 21.7 percent, respectively).

New Approach To Tourism Reported

92AF1027A *Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE*
in French 10 Jul 92 p 9

[Unattributed article: "Tourism: Morocco Introduces New Products: Mountains, Culture, and Complexes"]

[Text] In an interview with USA TODAY, the minister of tourism, Mr. Abdelkader Benslimane, defined the main lines of the concrete efforts he has undertaken, in particular to develop new forms of tourism.

Schematically, Mr. Benslimane indicated, we can say that Morocco has three main products to offer, i.e., seaside tourism (Morocco has a 3,500-km coastline), mountain tourism and its sports components (hiking, skiing, trekking, canoeing, etc.), and cultural, artistic, and ethnic tourism, which is becoming very promising.

Concerning the latter two, Morocco is currently developing a long-term strategy. In fact, the mountainous part of the country possesses characteristics that makes it a first-rate attraction for tourists.

Moroccan mountains offer every possibility, from hiking to mountain climbing, skiing, and rafting.

A network of rest houses equipped with a minimum of comfort is currently being set up by the very inhabitants of these regions, with government encouragement and

supervision. These rest houses are designed to meet the specific needs of a clientele looking for adventure, exoticism, and excitement.

As for cultural tourism, it is the subject of new efforts, to be undertaken jointly with neighboring friendly countries such as Spain, in order to promote common projects around cultural and urbanistic themes such as, for example, Muslim architecture in Andalusia (Seville, Granada), and its counterpart in Morocco (Fes, Marrakech).

For several thousand years, all through its history, Morocco was marked by many cultures and it possesses a rich architectural heritage.

In this respect, we should mention the Roman ruins in Volubilis and Lixus, the imperial cities (Marrakech, Fes, Meknes, and Rabat), the casbahs and ksour (Ait Benhaddou, Tifoutout, and Taourirt), and the fortified towns (El Jadida, Essaouira, Asilah, and Ksar-Eseghir).

Integrated Complexes

In recent years, tourism development plans have been prepared, and new tourism zones can be expected to emerge in the near future. From now on, the focus will be on the construction of large tourism facilities in the context of integrated complexes. "We are still beginners and, personally, I consider that tourism in our country is still in its infancy," Mr. Benslimane stated.

The legal, political, and economic framework is quite favorable to tourism; the State has provided incentives and, when it comes to tourism, the investment code is quite encouraging for national and foreign investors alike. "From this particular point of view," the minister added, "I believe that the objective conditions for a veritable takeoff of tourism are met." Viewed as the most westernized country in the Arab world, Morocco is a constitutional monarchy that skillfully allies tradition and modernity.

Resolutely geared to free market economy based on free enterprise and incentives to private initiative, Morocco is, above all, a politically stable country.

Improved OECD Category Explained

92AF0997B Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 3 Jul 92 pp 29-30

[Article by Afifa Boutaleb: "Morocco No Longer Risky Country"—first paragraph is LA VIE ECONOMIQUE introduction]

[Text] "Country risk" is an international measure of the economic, financial and political risk a country poses for prospective investors. We note with interest that Morocco, which was classed in category "C"—"poor risk"—has been moved into the category "B"—intermediate—in the OECD ratings.

Country risk is an evaluation of a country's economic and political health prepared in order to determine the risk run by foreign investors desirous of investing or trading there.

Informed investors need to protect themselves against all sorts of risks—exchange rates, interest rates, investment risks, the possibility of mergers, etc.

However, the most important of these is the risk of loan default, and one of the most critical tasks in the determination of credit ratings is assessment of country risk.

There is a set of international standards for measuring the various risk categories and classifying each country. Evaluating and analyzing these risks is a very important "field" whose practitioners include high-powered experts and international bodies that assign grades to the various countries around the world—grades on which leaders of investor countries and international banks rely.

Criteria

A number of criteria—both geographic and institutional—are used in defining country risk, which varies considerably from one country to another. For example, credit ratings for industrialized countries are not the same as for nonindustrialized countries.

Consequently, in order to establish classification criteria and frames of reference, the decision was made to use a group of well-defined countries with credit ratings within a certain range that can be distinguished from the rest of the world. This is the "OECD group," composed of OECD member states and countries that have concluded special borrowing arrangements with the IMF within the framework of the General Agreements To Borrow [GAB].

Risk Weighting

Weighted coefficients are applied to take differences between countries into account. Different weightings are given depending on whether the party concerned is a central government, local government, public or private entity. By way of example, OECD group ratings are hardly weighted at all! According to international experts, this distinction facilitates international financial integration and allows banks to get risk coverage for financial instruments issued by central governments. The criteria for country risk analysis are established by specialized financial institutions. These criteria are numerous and vary depending on the information and statistics obtained regarding the economic and political environment of the country in question. About a hundred criteria are used in the annual country classifications. Ratings may vary from one year to the next with changes in the country's economic, financial, and political structure, and they incorporate the weighting system used in the selection of the above-mentioned countries. The resultant rating measures the degree of risk the country represents. We note that countries are classified

into three categories: "A" is the best, "B" is intermediate, and "C" is the least favorable.

Multiple Risks

In the international rating system, country risk is divided into three major categories: political risk, economic risk, and financial risk. These risks may be more or less severe depending on the status of the country indicators.

Political risk is of special importance to international experts; it is tied to the stability of governments and to social cohesion. For analysis of political risk, one may point to specialized bodies such as World Political Risk Forecast [WPRF], COFACE [French Foreign Trade Insurance Company, "North-South Export Consultant," etc. Frost and Sullivan is another leading specialist in political risk analysis. There are WPRF tables ranking the various borrower countries. The specialists base their analyses on a number of indicators, including:

- the level of the country's development, its economic and financial infrastructure, as well as its adaptability and openness
- its international position in terms of production, capital, and currency
- foreign exchange reserves are a critical variable in assessing the vulnerability of the financial system
- the constraint and weight of debt are also important indicators; for example, if the country is under an IMF program, the latter can provide safeguards to creditors
- debt rescheduling is a positive factor in country risk calculus. In this regard, experts talk about the "vicious circle" a country needs to escape.

Objective Assessments?

Despite the analytical inventory of country risks prepared by experts and specialized bodies, it should be noted that while it is only the developing countries that are examined, sorted, and classified into risk categories, other countries may also suffer from these same risk conditions—but international experts deliberately obscure the fact. This is the case with a number of developed countries, which are in financial difficulty and therefore present certain risks but are not found on the list of poor-risk countries. The situation may also be obfuscated when rankings are altered from one year to the next, sometimes only because opinions change suddenly under the influence of a media campaign that may have been mounted for political ends. We would add, finally, that country risk remains a restrictive concept that often fails to provide objective analysis of the actual natural and economic environments of countries stigmatized as "poor risks." Morocco, for example, had a poor rating for a long time, even though it was constantly advancing and had a great deal to offer in terms of business and investment opportunities.

It was only recently, following the exceptionally fine "report cards" given by the IMF and World Bank, that

Morocco was moved up to the intermediate "B" category in the OECD country risk listings. This type of "official" country risk assessment fails to take into account other expert opinions, such as those of foreign economic operators with knowledge of conditions on the ground.

[box, p 30]

International Barometers

North-South Export Consultants bases its country classifications on four parameters: a country's economic weight, along with its degree of development; financial risks, including the weight of the debt burden and financial exposure; political risks, stability of governments and the chance of war; and the business environment, including openness to investors and management of the economy. In addition to this classification system, North-South Export offers special ratings tailored respectively for exporters, bankers, and investors interested in establishing a permanent presence.

COFACE watches national economic performances closely to fulfill its advisory obligations to the government. It has a "country risk" unit that prepares sets of indicators describing a country's economic and financial health, its sociopolitical environment and its payment record. Each year COFACE divides countries into four categories, going from 1 to 4 and from "good" to "poor" risk.

New English-Language Monthly Paper Issued

LD0608173692 Rabat MAP in English 1311 GMT
4 Aug 92

[Text] London, Aug. 4 (MAP)—The first issue of the new Arabic and English monthly AL-MOUHAJIR (THE IMMIGRANT), meant to serve the Arab-Islamic community in Britain, has seen the light of day this week.

The tabloid newspaper, mostly contributed to by Moroccan nationals residing in Great Britain, ran stories about mistreatment of Moroccans in Gibraltar, the assassination of former Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf and the impact of the European single market on non-European minorities.

The reader also finds in the issue counselling on the financial planning for foreigners residing in Britain, information about the visit of a Moroccan artistic troupe to Britain and news on the socio-cultural activities of the Moroccan and the Arab-Islamic community in London.

Nuclear Cooperation Agreements Signed

92P40240A Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 17 Jul 92 p 1

[Text] On Monday three cooperation agreements were signed in Rabat among CNESTEN (National Center of Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technologies), the University of Mohammed V, the Faculty of Science in Rabat,

and the Mohammedia Engineering School (EMI). These agreements come within the framework of CNESTEN's mission which includes promoting, developing, and coordinating nuclear activities in Morocco, as well as strengthening research and training capabilities in nuclear disciplines.

Along with EMI, CNESTEN is participating in the creation of a nuclear engineering section and will institute a joint scientific and technical effort to provide nuclear engineers for CNESTEN and its future center for nuclear studies in Maamora, as well as the overall utilization in our country of nuclear technologies.

Tourism Figures for 1991-92 Contrasted

92AF1072C Casablanca LA VIE ECONOMIQUE
in French 17 Jul 92 p 19

[Text] Last week, we reported that tourism receipts had increased 44.2 percent during the first six months of the year compared with the same period in 1991. There is nothing exceptional about these results, however, given the major crisis that dealt the tourist movement such a stiff blow last year.

In contrast, it is more interesting to note that growth is up 10.1 percent compared with 1990, although some finicky economists note that inflation has reduced that growth to a negative level. But let us not be overly concerned. Rather, let us turn to other figures from the Ministry of Tourism.

The number of persons entering the country has risen 17 percent over 1990, a figure that should be compared with the rate of growth for receipts (up 10.1 percent). It means that tourists in 1992 are spending less than they did in 1990.

In 1990, 1,542,282 tourists entered the country, versus 1,817,539 in 1992.

The ministry has included in its figures Moroccans living abroad, who can be considered as tourists, it emphasized, when they spend their vacations in Morocco, according to the World Organization of Tourism. The number of persons entering the country has evolved as follows: RME:[sic] 1990, 305,528; 1991, 271,061; and 1992, 337,049.

In contrast, the comment on Maghrebians tourists is very reserved, noting simply that there has been a steady increase. One should also point out noteworthy increases in visitors from several countries: Spaniards, up 26.3 percent; Italians, up 32.1 percent; Americans, up 11.7 percent; Austrians, up 23.9 percent; Australians, up 23.3 percent; and Japanese, up 8.4 percent.

In contrast, the figures for two other national groups are down: the French, down 18.1 percent; and Arabs, down 21.3 percent.

The French were Morocco's main customers and the drop is troublesome.

Finally, in terms of the number of nights spent in hotels, the figures are satisfactory: 1990, 8 million; 1991, 6.8 million; and 1992, 9 million, an increase of 11.2 percent over 1990 and also greater than the variation in receipts.

SAUDI ARABIA

First Privately Run Seaport Discussed

92AE0523B Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 5 Jul 92 p 11

[Article by 'Attallah al-Marwani: "First Privately Run Seaport Discussed"; "Prince Fahd Bin Sultan Discusses Arrangements To Inaugurate the Port on the 26th"; "Invitation to Businessmen To Discuss Establishment of a Maritime Company in Tabuk"]

[Text] His Royal Highness Prince Fahd bin Sultan bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz, prince of Tabuk Region, will hold a meeting on the 26th of the current month, Muharam, in his office to discuss arrangements for the management of the Diba' commercial seaport. The meeting shall be attended by a number of deputy undersecretaries of state from the concerned ministries who will discuss measures to manage the seaport for passengers, cargo and pilgrims. His Royal Highness has issued his directions to Mr. Murayziq Salman al-Balwi, Chairman of Tabuk Chamber of Commerce to invite area businessmen to discuss the issue of establishing a maritime company in the area.

In a related development, Mr. Salem al-Jarid, a businessman at Diba' who is sponsoring the company, has received a number of tenders for purchase and lease of ferries. Feasibility studies are underway for the operation of such ferries in Diba' seaport. It is worth mentioning that the distance between Diba' and the closest Egyptian seaport, Safaga could be covered in four hours. Diba' commercial seaport is the first privately operated Saudi port on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

TUNISIA

Islamist Trial Proceedings, Reaction Described

92AF1089A Tunis REALITES in French
17 Jul 92 pp 12-14

[Article by Moncef Mahroug: "Snapshot of a Trial"]

[Text] The presiding judge was about to read the indictments when he was stopped short as the defendants began to sing the national anthem. It was Friday, 10 July, in the courtroom where the military tribunal was holding the only session to date in the second trial (delayed until 27 July) of two trials of Islamists. On trial in the second set of proceedings are officials and activists of al-Nahdah charged with endangering the internal security of the state.

It would have been surprising if the highly awaited trial—or, more accurately, trials—had proceeded without an attempt by the Islamists to put their mark on things and have their say.

However, judging by the tenor of the first of these two trials (the one involving most of al-Nahdah's leadership), there is little resemblance to previous trials of Islamists.

The first unmistakable difference between the current proceedings, which we will continue to follow in the coming weeks, and the two "megatrials" of 1981 and 1987 can be detected outside the courtroom: There are no Islamist activists demonstrating in the streets, contrary to what happened in 1981 and 1987. On Friday, a foreign observer attending the opening of the trial had noted that, "It will be interesting to see how the streets will react, particularly the Islamist activists."

One week into the trial, however, the streets are quiet. In that regard, there is no resemblance whatsoever between this year's trials and the previous ones—the 1987 trial, in particular. Exactly five years ago, the leaders of the Islamist movement (which later became al-Nahdah) were about to be judged, and not a day went by without demonstrations and clashes between Islamist activists and the police in the streets of Tunis and in other cities of the interior. The number of demonstrations and the violence of them reached such a level that it was thought and feared that Tunisia was slowly sinking into an Iranian scenario.

With regard to the trials now taking place, the public has shown complete indifference and the Islamists have failed to react. It is to be wondered whether this indifference and absence of a reaction might have influenced the attitudes of the defendants, as they appear to be less combative and less inclined to be provocative or defiant in their behavior toward the court.

In fact, some foreign journalists who have come to cover the two trials complain of their "uneventfulness" and of having nothing—or practically nothing—to sink their teeth into. To some extent or another, most of the defendants have cited instances of torture and of being subjected to threats and pressure. The presiding judge allowed their complaints to be heard, and certain newspapers have given them considerable coverage. Aside from that aspect common to most of the defendants, however, their responses to questioning have varied.

While the defendants are at least presumably united by a feeling of solidarity, those among them to be questioned in court have used very different defense strategies. A first group of defendants sought to defend themselves by defending the al-Nahdah movement. They denied the entire slate of accusations, asserting that their statements had been extracted from them by force or threat, and testified that their movement had not intended—much less planned or set in motion—any activities to overthrow the existing government and, specifically, to assassinate the president.

Within this same group, the defendants facing the most serious charges (namely, of plotting a personal attack on the president), were very prompt to acknowledge their membership in the al-Nahdah movement. Islamist activists do not usually make that admission, at least not so readily, but they did so here in order to increase their chances of refuting the more serious charges. Wasfi Zoughlami, for one, stated that he was a member of the al-Nahdah movement, that he had "an activity in the mosques like the others who attend prayers," and that he was responsible for a sector in the near suburbs of Tunis.

Other defendants went even further. Tijani Ben Brahim and Hedi El Ghali admitted to traveling to Algeria on behalf of the movement and helping hunted individuals escape from Tunisia to take refuge in Algeria. Some—Bouraoui Makhoulf was one of them—admitted that they had worked as liaisons or had even assembled Molotov cocktails and been instructed to attack police stations. However, not one of the defendants admitted taking part in a bid to overthrow the government. Their only goal, said one of them, was to "secure freedom."

One last, but small group of defendants offered almost no resistance and behaved in a very cooperative manner toward the court. The most remarkable in that regard was Nabil Nouri. When questioned about the nature of his activities, he stated that, "I helped them organize demonstrations during the Gulf war." He went on to testify that, following an interlude from February to May 1991, "Ali Zouaghi asked me to prepare Molotov cocktails without telling me where they would be used, and later asked me to destroy them." Nabil Nouri also acknowledged that he was asked to set up four or five small groups in his area to attack a police station in Zahrouti using Molotov cocktails.

It was toward the end of his questioning, however, that Nabil Nouri distinguished himself the most from the other defendants. While most of them, if not all, had disavowed their previous statements to the police or the investigating judge, Bouraoui [as published] Nouri testified that the transcript of his statements to the investigating judge "contains certain truths." On being pressed as to whether "it is reasonable for you to purchase knives and other instruments without knowing how they would be used," the defendant stated that he after had "watched television," he was "astounded" at not being "aware of what was happening" and "personally had not understood it that way." The presiding judge replied, "But you are responsible for your actions!" To which the defendant responded that he was sorry and that he thought "it was merely a matter of organizing demonstrations like the demonstrations during the Gulf war." Nabil Nouri ended by asking the court "to take these aspects into consideration," and stated, "I made a mistake and I ask to be forgiven."

By the end of a week, not one defendant had explicitly acknowledged the existence of a plot to assassinate the president and overthrow the government. Certain testimonies, nonetheless, seemed to contain implications,

allusions, or responses that would support the charge. When asked by the presiding judge whether he had staked out the president's residence, Nabil Nouri merely answered, "I was not given that task." On the same matter, Bouraoui Makhlouf was asked about the decision to shoot down the president's plane with a Stinger missile, and did not deny the existence of a plot outright. He stated that "it is logically impossible that I would have been involved because I was arrested before the preparations began, according to the dates given in the brief." Do these elements suffice as a basis for conclusions? The court alone has the power to decide that.

[box, p 13]

'The Levelheadedness of the Defense'

One salient trait of the previous Islamist "megatrials" was the sparring, not to say confrontation, that occurred between the judges and the defense attorneys, the two main protagonists in any courtroom proceeding. Those who followed the 1981 and 1987 trials closely remember their heated exchanges.

One of those exchanges escalated into an open war: In 1981, a judge kept the court in session for 30 hours without interruption.

Is it likely that such incidents will occur in the two trials now under way? Although relations between judges and defense lawyers over the past two years have been quite strained and occasional disputes have arisen, the two parties now seem intent on treating each other tactfully.

When the second trial opened on Friday 10 July, the presiding judge and the defense avoided confrontation. The defense lawyers, in particular, were more reserved than usual. In the past, they have readily volunteered to take up such cases, but most (48) of the lawyers present in Bab Saadoun on Friday had been appointed to the case.

The recently elected president of the bar association, Mr. Abdelwaheb El Behi, who announced shortly after being elected that his colleagues had asked him to give priority to working out a solution with government officials to the problem of social benefits for lawyers, merely requested that the trial in Bab Saadoun be "delayed for a reasonable amount of time," although some of his colleagues urged him to request a delay "until the end of the other trial." It was Mr. Chakroun, in his usual dissenting manner, who specified the latter preference after Mr. El Behi had finished speaking.

It was also in moderate terms that the defense lawyers described the problems that some of them have had in contacting their clients.

[box, p 14]

'Two Trials in One'

Why are there two trials instead of one? Why have the leaders and activists of al-Nahdah who are charged with

endangering the internal security of the state been divided into two groups to be tried separately by two different courts?

It was known only a few days before the trials opened that there would in fact be two of them. Ever since, that question has puzzled all Tunisian and foreign observers alike, whether they are journalists, representatives of international organizations, or diplomats.

Even the defense lawyers, although presumably more knowledgeable of the ins and outs of the case, are in doubt. When one of member of the defense team, Mr. Chakroun, raised the matter at the opening of the second trial on Friday 10 July, he was probably conveying the thoughts of his colleagues. After speaking in support of a request for a delay made by the new president of the bar, Mr. Abdelwaheb El Behi, Mr. Chakroun—himself a former president of the bar association—stated that "one month is needed to understand why there are two trials instead of one." The presiding judge promptly responded by noting that in deciding to investigate two cases, the judicial authorities had not violated any procedural rules and that, because the events in the two cases are not identical, there is nothing to prevent such a move.

Ben Ali Speech at Plan Signing Ceremony

*LD0507091892 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Jul 92*

[Speech by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali at Carthage Palace on 4 Jul at a ceremony marking the signing of the law on the launch of the eighth development plan—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Ladies and gentlemen, we have just signed before you the law on the launch of the eighth development plan, which we hope will be the right premise for a new boost to a real economic and social recovery, taking into account the methodology adopted in the preparation of this law and the competence of those who contributed to it; and also taking into account its objectives, which reconcile between realism and ambition.

The debate and discussions in the preparation of the plan, at the national, sectorial and regional levels lasted nearly three years. Broad consultations took place and they enabled all the dynamic forces to contribute effectively to the formulation of the policies and the proposal of future programs. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, the numerous effective measures that we have taken since the change in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, have helped us realize major reforms in all these fields. [passage omitted] Thanks to these reforms and the tireless efforts made by the state bodies and institutions and all the citizens, and thanks to the new climate and the unity of the people around the national goals, and thanks to

everybody's sincere determination to improve the situation, overcome the difficulties and take up the challenges with the participation of all the social parties (?involved in) production on the basis of negotiations and dialogue, the realization of the seventh plan continued, and it achieved all its objectives. It even made it possible to exceed some of the growth rates and improvements that were expected. Therefore we can say that the results achieved during the seventh plan were the fruit of these reforms and collective efforts, and also one of the gains of the new era.

On this basis it was possible to prepare the eighth plan and crystallize its policies and future programs. It was also possible to lay down the general framework for development, define its constituents and coordinate between the latter on the basis of a comprehensive and integrated vision and a clear methodology. This is what justifies the continued adoption of plans in our liberal economic system.

Ladies and gentlemen, our choice of this method of consultations and our commitment to it is a practical embodiment of the principles of democracy and participation introduced by the new era, and we are still endeavoring to entrench them with determination and constancy out of our renewed belief that the society we are building is a society of dialogue, moderation and concord. We believe that this method is the only way to take up the challenges facing the national community at this crucial time, characterized by rapid transformations in the international arena that herald a deep change in international relations and will have far-reaching repercussions on the prospects for development in all countries, without exception. [passage omitted]

We have decided to give a new boost to the action of the Higher Planning Committee to enable it to follow-up the implementation of the plan and contribute, at regular intervals, once a year at least, to assess the results achieved, and propose amendments on the basis of new developments and changes within the framework of the fundamental principles and the approved major trends.

At the same time we will endeavor to invite the Economic and Social Council and the regional councils to hold special sessions to follow-up the implementation of the plan. Each year and for the entire duration of the plan, the government will present a report to the Chamber of Deputies, which will include a comprehensive assessment of the progress made in the execution of this plan and in which it will propose the required amendments. [passage omitted]

In order to achieve this main goal in our plan we must reach a growth rate of nearly 6 percent per year. This requires an important volume of investments, for which the public and private sectors must join efforts in the framework of their complementarity and on the basis of the preservation of the general equilibriums in the country. In order to achieve this, the deficit in the state

budget, the balance of payments and in the debt indicators must be curbed. This is, in our view, is the best way to reconcile between the need to respond to the present aspirations and ambitions and the continued in-depth improvement of the economic situation, which guarantees the continuation of the development action on a medium and long-term basis and which enables our economy to acquire a solid structure, allowing it to face up to the current domestic and international difficulties. [passage omitted]

We place the realization of foodstuff security at the forefront of the plan's priorities by way of the mobilization and safeguarding of natural resources alongside the consolidation of care to production activities, solving fundamental problems related to real estate structures, and policies regarding loans, agricultural guidance and training. [passage omitted]

The field of scientific research and technology occupies a distinguished position in the long-term plan because of its decisive role and its effect on diversity of production and improvement of returns.

We also raised the position of ocean protection and the environment to national priorities due to its great impact on the health of citizens and improvements to their living standards, and its importance regarding guaranteeing the continuation of the development plan.

Within the framework of this plan we took the initiative to consolidate the plans aimed at containing the pollution phenomenon. In parallel, we laid down a complete protection strategy so as to avoid these dangers. Municipalities have also laid down programs for the protection of the environment and the safety of the ocean; districts committees are working hard to help municipalities achieve these objectives. [passage omitted]

The powers that have been granted to regional councils, the start of the experiment of regional investment companies, and the amendment of the system of encouragement and incentives, will have a good effect in supporting private effort and give an impetus to the pattern of growth.

Ladies and gentlemen, development depends primarily on gained experience and technical skill, and the extent of the precision in the deployment of resources. These are factors that consolidate our chances of facing up to the challenges and providing our country with a unique opportunity to open new scope for development.

The success of the plan requires a number of basic conditions, among which are political stability, the continuation of social peace, and the performance by establishments and individuals of their economic and social duty. The state has been keen to shoulder all its responsibilities, to play the role entrusted to it, and has worked earnestly to provide security and stability in the country within the context of respect for the law. It will continue this work, considering it to be one of the most pressing

needs of the citizen and society, on the one hand, and a basic condition for ensuring the development process in the country on the other.

There is no scope for socioeconomic prosperity in a society governed by chaos and overwhelmed by neglect. The state will also continue to protect weak groups, nurture the sensitive strategic sectors which represent the primary base of economic and social life in the country. We will continue the reforms aimed at freeing initiative with regard to the policies of investment, exports, imports, and prices, to remove what remains of restrictions which prevent the optimum employment of resources and the [word indistinct] control of the tools of management and production.

The aim of these reforms, which cover management and the financial and monetary apparatus, is not confined to increasing the efficiency of the establishment and its ability to compete; they also constitute an effective instrument for attracting external investment, which facilitates the achievement of our development objectives.

Is there a need to remind you of the prominent position and trust that Tunisia has come to enjoy among international political, economic and financial quarters as a result of the policy it pursues, characterized by moderation and vision, and the effort it exerts to employ its own and external capabilities, and its continuous adhesion to meeting its financial commitments toward all the parties? [Applause] [passage omitted]

As much as these achievements are a source of pride and reassurance, they should be the best incentive for all sides to preserve and consolidate them, to respond to state efforts and support them for the benefit of the higher interests of the homeland. It is the duty of the social sides to provide social peace and to be committed to its continuation by adopting a civilized path, and this should be considered a sacred national duty.

This aim has become easily accessible after the new era restored the status and initiative to professional organizations, committed itself to their independence, and drew up for them a course of cooperation based on dialogue, negotiation and agreement. [passage omitted]

Let everybody know that we are adopting a calm path that takes into consideration all the objective conditions and interests, and that we hate stagnation as much as we hate adventures, and we are pursuing the various equilibriums and avoiding excesses by employing various regulations and legislations, such as protecting the consumer and securing honest competition. Parallel to this, the whole nation is invited to effectively contribute to the materialization of these aims by doubling efforts and rushing to work with seriousness and sincerity. [passage omitted]

President Ben Ali Receives Spanish Defense Minister

LD0907223392 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 9 Jul 92

[Excerpt] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali this morning received Spanish Defense Minister Julian Garcia Vargas at Carthage Palace. Tunisian Defense Minister Abdelaziz Ben Dhia and the ambassador of Spain to Tunisia were present at the meeting.

Following the audience the Spanish defense minister said that his meeting with the president was an opportunity to review relations between Tunisia and Spain [words indistinct] and also relations between the Arab Maghreb Union and the EEC, which he said are fundamental to the Mediterranean region. [passage omitted]

President Speaks of Commitment to Human Rights

LD1107142692 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jul 92

[Text] This morning President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received at the presidential palace in Carthage Messrs. Rachid Driss, Hassib Ben Ammar, and Toufik Bouderbala.

During the meeting, they discussed the issue of human rights in Tunisia and the interest that national and international organizations have in that issue.

The president reminded his visitors of his permanent commitment to human rights in every field and of what the new era has been doing to consolidate the achievements in those fields. He also emphasized the need to gather the efforts of all sides in order to consolidate and develop those achievements.

President Authorizes Publication of Human Rights Report

LD2007200992 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Jul 92

[Text] The official spokesman for the presidency announced that within the framework of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's interest in human rights, his devotion to consecrating human rights, and his views on consolidating the protection of human rights, and in accordance with his speech on 12 May, the head of state has permitted the publication of the report he requested in April from the chairman of the Higher Committee for Human Rights and Basic Liberties. The report is on the extent of implementing the recommendations which the fact-finding committee proposed.

The official spokesman added that after receiving the first report his excellency the president instructed the quarters concerned in the state about the implementation of all the committee's recommendations. He requested a second report, which was submitted to his excellency on 13 July and with which the general public

will be acquainted with. This shows the head of state's concern for safeguarding human rights and makes his policy in this area clear.

Conditional Release Granted to 767 Prisoners

LD2107214592 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 21 Jul 92

[Text] On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the declaration of the republic, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has decided to issue a presidential pardon that would benefit a number of prisoners. That came during a meeting this morning at Carthage Palace with Minister of State and Interior Minister Abdallah Kallel, and Justice Minister Sadok Chaabane.

On that occasion, the Interior Ministry announced a decision to grant conditional release to 767 prisoners. Later, the Justice Ministry announced that 1,191 people who had been sentenced will be able to have their rights reinstated.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Romania Submits Loans, Hopes To Sign Agreements

92AE0495B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Jul 92 p 10

[Report from Abu Dhabi by 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sudayqi: "Romania Requests Loans From Four Gulf States. Will Sign Investment and Tax Agreements With the UAE (United Arab Emirates)"]

[Text] Romanian minister of state for economic affairs, Paul Coman, said his country has incurred losses of about \$4.7 billion as a result of observing the international boycotts of Iraq and Yugoslavia.

Coman told a news conference at the conclusion of his four-day visit to Abu Dhabi that Romania asked the United Nations to compensate it for the losses it is incurring because of the boycotts. He added that Romania recognizes that the compensation process is long and complicated and hopes to sidestep the issue by securing long-term soft loans.

He said that the Romanian Government has indeed requested such loans from Saudi Arabia, the UAE [United Arab Emirates], Kuwait, and Qatar but that the four governments are still scrutinizing the projects for which Romania seeks funding.

The Romanian minister declined to give specific figures but said, as an example, that he submitted seven or eight projects for UAE financing.

One such project involves utilizing the excess capacity of Romanian oil refineries, currently at only 12 million tons of the original 32 million tons per year, of which only 20 million tons [as published] is currently being utilized.

The collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the shrinkage of Romanian imports of Russian and Iraqi crude, and the decline of Eastern European purchases of Romanian refined products as a result of current economic and fiscal crises [have shrunk Romanian oil exports].

The Romanian minister added that while it seeks to borrow abroad, Romania is owed overdue payments by such countries as Iraq, Yugoslavia, etc., which are indebted to it for a total of \$2.7 billion in loans.

He explained that Romania needs to borrow \$1.6 billion to modernize its petroleum, industrial, and other sectors. This means that it would have a balance-of-payments surplus, rather than a deficit, if it were paid back the loans it extended.

The minister said that Romania is about to sign an agreement on investment guarantees and a tax treaty with the UAE, and that the Romanian-UAE Joint Commission will, at its first session late in August, sign an economic, trade, and technical cooperation agreement between the two countries. He emphasized that such agreements provide an appropriate legal framework for bilateral cooperation.

He pointed out that UAE investors currently participate in 51 Romanian projects in such venues as tourism, real estate, and commerce.

He emphasized that the climate in Romania is conducive to investment and that new investment laws offer foreign investors substantial guarantees.

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Correspondent Studies Violence, Drug Use

92AE0526B London AL-WASAT in Arabic 6 Jul 92 pp 36-39

[Article by 'Afaf Zayn]

[Text] What has changed in Yemen through the experience of unifying its "two parts," the northern and the southern, and preparing to officially consecrate the state of unity next November? Is the Yemeni man today, in the state of unity, different from what he used to be previously? Has the transitional period succeeded in realizing the concept of unity on the social level?

During my recent visit to Yemen I was interested to hear that a number of mosque imams had in their sermons attacked an arts celebration sponsored by the Yemeni Ministry of Culture on the second anniversary of the declaration of unity because it lacked any religious and national symbolism. Among those who participated in the celebration were young female artists, mostly from southern Yemen, who gave a concert of national songs with their words written by Minister of culture Hasan al-Lawzi.

But the subject of the imams' speeches attacking the celebration soon became a rich material for "fun making" in the salons of some of the Yemeni politicians. The fiery speeches that were delivered from mosque pulpits attacking unity and accusing it of treason, and the sarcasm pouring from the political salons, lead one to question whether this is all the transitional period is able to achieve in the way of uniting the Yemeni society.

Yemeni Prime Minister Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas believes that on the political level there is a great amount of exaggeration in the talk about tasks of the transitional period and what is hoped to be achieved, particularly with regard to merging two different political schools that are radically different and which were in power before the unity. Talking about the transitional period on the social level one could become overoptimistic with regard to what is hoped for, but difficult to achieve. Merging two different types of social life with different outlooks, that is, two different Yemeni societies, one in the north and the other in the south, appears more complex and difficult than a mere political merger.

While southerners of both sexes consider themselves a cultural and political vanguard open to dialogue with the other side in order to transform the country along lines of "what the contemporary society should be," the northerners believe that they are advocates of fundamentalism and adherence to Yemeni heritage and tradition, which the other side should emulate in order to practice "adherence to the fundamental and to what's superior." These advocates of adherence to Islamic laws in politics, economy, and social practices have revived their demands in northern Yemen before the reunification and after its proclamation. On the opposite side of this growing trend there are the advocates of "modernism and modernists" in the south who promote the inclusion of Islamic shari'ah as an article of the constitution. Amidst this state of affair the Islamists in the north have called for the establishment of the Yemeni Reform Grouping Party [hizb al-tajammu'al-Yamani li al-islah] which reflects the ambitions of both the religious and political leaderships. In the meantime, ideological disension is gnawing at the Yemeni Socialist Party's [YSP] structure. This came in the wake of the worldwide collapse of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Moreover, the YSP and the Congress Party [as published], its partner in power and one of the two historical parties that launched the unity experiment, came under moral and political pressure following the worldwide collapse of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Consequently, when the reunification was proclaimed and the political leadership decided to absorb all [government] employees of the southern part, regardless of the great financial consequences of this decision, male and female southerners undertook carrying out a difficult task that covers both the northern and southern part of the country. A female Yemeni deputy, who was a member of the People's Assembly in the south before unity, told AL-WASAT: "Basically, the task which we have undertaken is to participate in developing Yemeni

society." The Yemeni deputy believes that the southern people's long struggle experience qualifies them to assign themselves as the vanguard nucleus of the young Yemeni Republic.

Khat and Women Gatherings

Following the proclamation of reunification, Islamic revival in the north reached its climax. The majority of women and female students wore the Islamic garb and the young men grew beards and began attending religious lessons. They relinquished khat [drug] chewing and political arguments and intellectual discussions that come with it, preferring mosques to khat sessions, and religious studies to ideological discussions. When employee transfers began between the two parts of the country, especially in the field of education, the northerners, and especially the capital's inhabitants, felt that the familiar social traditions and customs in which they were reared, were now being exposed to an "internal invasion," in view of the large number of southerners who came to the north. The Islamic garb-wearing [northern] woman works side by side with her southern sister. The sight of southern female deputies involved in a heated political debate in the Chamber of Deputies with tribal leaders and some well-known national and religious leaders has become a common scene. The Yemeni Chamber of Deputies often looks like a gathering of human islands, remote from one another and with no common language or a dialogue linking them. While a southern Yemeni female deputy would be engaged in a discussion with the Chamber's speaker or with one of the parliamentary bloc leaders regarding the appropriateness of a certain laws regulating the family and the woman's rights, we see a northern housewife declining to sit with the visitors of her husband who is a prominent political leader, even if there were among the visitors Arab ladies who came to work in the capital.

The housewife often holds a private ladies' party in a long hall with draped windows to screen against prying eyes, and a hall floor covered with luxurious carpets and cushions for the women to sit on. The visiting guest, who has a work relationship with the master of the house, sits in their midst. To honor the visitor, a woman "awwadah" [folk singer] is invited to the party to sing enchanting Sanaanite songs, while a "hannanah" [henna beautician] skilled in the use of henna, paints tiny wild floral patterns on the arms and shoulders of the ladies who wish to be so painted. She uses henna water mixed with the essence of wild plants imported from Ethiopia and the heights of Oman. This is accompanied by playing soft Sanaanite tunes and burning Dhofar incense in ornate pottery burners. Enchantment of the women's gathering is heightened by soft whispering and charming talk that fire one's imagination. Khat is without question the centerpiece [al-miqyal] of the women's gathering. The Yemeni woman chews khat, and, in southern Yemen, wears a special clothes for it called "al-diri".

The southern Yemeni woman finds herself drawn to women's khat sessions like a happy butterfly. The

southern Yemeni women have become addicted to frequenting female khat chewing sessions. A few months after the declaration of unity some southern politicians residing in Sanaa started asking their women to observe the social code that is prevalent in the north and to avoid joining the men's khat sessions. They should only prepare it [khat] for the guests without taking part in serving it. Social events have become two kinds, one is for women and another for men. Seldom the southern woman accompanies her husband if he wished to visit his northern friends at their homes.

Armed Processions

Because of the escalation of armed violence and incidents of political assassination, southern men in the north, especially politicians, are resorting to the use of body guards for their protection. This has contributed to the spread of the phenomenon of the male society among southerners in the north. It has become a common scene to see men of protection squads swaggering in Sanaa's streets. They resemble small military units with their own weapons, have their own passwords, and operate in shifts. The protection squads vary according to differences in the social and political standing of the individual for whom protection is provided. Protection squads for the tribal chiefs seem to be more relaxed, ostentatious, and possessing a variety of modern weapons. Houses of tribal chiefs look like military towers, equipped with medium range guns. Their guards seem to always be laughing. Often pedigreed Arabian horses are let loose in the house owner's courtyard. The whole scene looks like a special setting for shooting a documentary film about a particular historic period. One would ask: How does the government's security plan relate to this odd situation?

When the Yemeni political command decided to absorb southern Yemeni employees as a part of reunification, the Yemeni capital became witness to a phenomenon that was unknown in the northern male-dominated society: that some women were forced to work far away from the family home in the south. This strange and new phenomenon in Yemeni society developed into a social red herring that the veiled northern women, wearing the Islamic garb, have received with hostility and suspicion. Shortly before the second unity anniversary an educated Yemeni woman was appointed the government official spokesman. Mrs. Amah al-'Alim became a Yemeni "Tutwiler"; she is assisted by several aides and has an office of her own in the Ministry of Information.

Actually the Yemeni woman's status is linked to her family's social standing more than to regional affiliations. Is what's happening in Sanaa a radical change in social customs and traditions inherent in both parts? Or is it an appearance of transformation feigned to win acceptance by offering certain concessions that accommodate the customs of the conservative northern society that adheres to Islamic traditions in clothing and social codes, and where general appearance is part and parcel of the national character?

Clusters of Misery

Before unity was declared, the southerners used to boast that they were satisfied with chewing khat once a week, every Thursday evening. When Sanaa became the first political capital of the Yemeni Republic, the southerners, especially the politicians, found themselves compelled to consume khat daily. Al-Miqyal [khat session] in Yemen is a political salon in which all political ideas and thoughts are discussed freely without embarrassment or affectation. Consequently, use of khat has become a requirement for al-Miqyal participants. This has led to Yemeni families incurring heavy social and economic expenses in the midst of the acute economic crisis which Yemen is suffering. The southern housewife has found herself compelled to hold khat sessions for women which are more costly than those of men. Despite the Yemeni government's wish to play down the significance of the khat chewing phenomenon, pointing out that it is a regional habit in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in general, the government has for many years been trying to curb khat cultivation by replacing it with coffee bushes and other useful plants. Visitors to the old city of Sanaa, where tourists watch the shopkeepers chewing khat every afternoon, notice that shopkeepers in the "Salt" market and the "Silver" market avoid chewing khat in public. Still, money allocated for khat burdens the Yemeni man's budget, especially the politician whose salary is limited and cannot be exceeded.

Housing is another fundamental problem from which the Yemeni society, both northerner and southerner, is suffering. The Yemeni leadership's decision to absorb employees from the southern part is the opposite of the Bonn government's action following the announcement of German unity. That government laid off about one million East German workers. This decision has put a heavy financial burden on Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas's government. The difficult economic situation was exacerbated by the repatriation of about one million Yemeni workers from the GCC countries and the discontinuation of the large financial remittances in hard currencies which they used to make to their families before Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Yemen's sympathetic stand with Iraq precipitated the repatriation of these workers to their country. However, a visitor to Sanaa and its suburbs notices that the Yemeni society that is based on tribal laws and customs has been able to absorb the returnees who have been able to find suitable accommodation and social services. The housing problem is one of the negative effects of the return of the expatriate workers, particularly since a large number of them went to the capital to look for jobs suitable for their qualifications. Simultaneously, tens of thousands of southerners—politicians, professionals, and employees—headed for the capital. However, Sanaa found a radical solution for the housing crisis by expanding in all directions and building new residential areas of hastily built houses. At the far edges of modern Sanaa that is spreading in all directions, a new phenomenon is emerging. This is a strange collection of "clusters of misery" made up of tin shacks and cardboard boxes inhabited by refugees from the Horn of Africa who have begun demonstrating disturbing social behaviors that violate Yemeni traditions—robbery,

immoral incidents, violent sex, drugs, and trading with everything that is banned and prohibited. All this is happening in a society that is in a developing and formative stage at which trading and possession of arms has become rife, along which there is the phenomenon of adherence to morals according to Islamic laws.

Revenge and the Eyes of the State

A few months after the proclamation of unity, the Yemeni government realized that, in the midst of all the aforementioned uncommon phenomena, it is not living in the era of "Hammurabi's dignified republic." While the motives and reasons for the traditional political enmity have ended with the establishment of unity between both parts of the country, maintenance of political security is not the only task that security and intelligence agents in Yemen are shouldering. Although the sense of optimism over what has been achieved prompted the government to consider for some time the possibility of abolishing the security and intelligence authority, the mushrooming "clusters of misery" that consist of tin shacks, and the resultant spread of crimes against public morals, have made it necessary to reconsider the revival of security and intelligence organs. The need for help from these organs has become even more urgent as political assassination and violence have increased, a phenomenon which the Yemeni prime minister describes as "political revenge." The state of relaxation that prevailed in Yemen has probably encouraged certain factions in both parts of Yemen to settle old accounts involving party affiliations and family feuds. But the government security plan is trying to rekindle in the Yemeni people the state of alertness and vigilance in order to help it to contain violence. However, the government plan does not seem realistic in view of the fact that crimes of tribal revenge are the concern of the traditional tribal authorities, and are not crimes against public statutes which are punishable according to objective laws.

Since the second year of unity it has become a common scene to see that some luxury hotel workers in Sanaa are not mere daily workers, but the "vigilant eyes of the state," as some would say jokingly. However, a visitor to the capital does not feel that the presence of security and intelligence men is oppressive, since they observe all rules of etiquette and social graces. The degree of the "vigilance of eyes of the state" varies according to the position of the visitor or the resident, depending on his relations with the state, his social standing, and profession. Elements of armed escorts belonging to politicians and tribal chiefs maintain friendly relations with the security and intelligence elements, cooperate with them, and guide them. Tribal or political affiliation often contributes to strengthening this cooperation or minimizing it. Daily in late afternoon some of these security men wear their traditional clothes, rush to their cars, or sit under a nearby shady tree in order to indulge in khat chewing. Likewise, traffic police personnel and guards of major government headquarters make a mass rush [for khat chewing]. One day an Egyptian academic told Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Maqalih, president of Sanaa University and one of the most prominent cultured Yemenis, while

chewing khat at his residence: "Are you not afraid that Sanaa, the capital, will be occupied every late afternoon, since its roads become vulnerable to all eventualities when the traffic police and government headquarters guards retreat to khat chewing?"

Violence in the Yemeni Republic is not confined to political crimes, assassination, and minor moral offenses committed by African refugees inhabiting tin shacks. Another strange and disturbing phenomenon has begun to emerge in Yemeni society. The inhabitants of Sanaa cite the incident of the disappearance of female student Lina Mustafa 'Abd-al-Khaliq, daughter of Mustafa 'Abd al-Khaliq, the present deputy minister for legal affairs and former chairman of the high court of justice in southern Yemen. Lina disappeared two months ago. After a thorough search by the security organs her body was found near the home of a prominent religious leader in Sanaa.

Investigation has shown that before she was shot she was in the house of prominent religious leader who admitted that he had married her in order to forestall rumors. Investigations came to a halt when they reached a critical stage, which the security authorities did not wish to go beyond "in order to avoid the worst." As a result, the girl's family refused to receive her body from the hospital's morgue. The kidnapping of Lina 'Abd-al-Khaliq was not the last mysterious immoral incident. Certain other similar incidents occurred in which relatives of victims, in order to avoid a scandal, refused to report the matter to the security authorities. In addition to the disappearance of a number of female university students, several mysterious suicide incidents have occurred among young men in several Yemeni areas.

Jarallah 'Umar, the most prominent Yemeni social theoretician, said that suicide incidents are due to oppressive psychological conditions caused by economic and social factors in a society that is undergoing changes affecting its evolution and shape and torn between two contradicting opposites in the north and the south. These changes produce disturbing social phenomena that increasingly add burdens on Haydar Abu-al-'Attas's government, that now finds itself facing three fronts:

1. The political strategy program, the economic reform, and its infant security plan.
2. The political leadership that sometimes does not cooperate with the government because of different interpretations and certain views that have their objective justifications.
3. The social considerations for a clearly broad-based tribal system in the north, which forces the security authorities to cease their efforts [to investigate crimes] at a certain point in order to avoid crossing politically sensitive lines.

It is in this atmosphere that the Yemeni people are awaiting the consecration of their unity in November, and wonder what surprises, developments, or incidents the country will witness between now and then.

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